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Ensemble Theatre and Citizenship Education

How Ensemble Theatre Contributes to
Citizenship Education

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Abstract

This study examines the ways in which ensemble theatre making can contribute to citizenship education. A range of political theories construct the framework for democratic politics and active citizenship which, in turn, become the pedagogical basis for the ensemble model of theatre learning. Outstanding political theories, such as Castoriadis' theory of the *imaginary institution of society* and Habermas' model for *communicative action*, structure a theoretical basis which constitutes an ideal definition for democratic politics and active citizenship. This framework becomes the pedagogic ground of ensemble theatre that constitutes a collective process of theatre making and, therefore, aims to function as a democratic learning experience in the art of theatre. In this context, a research praxis that combines methodological elements from action research and case study is conducted in two high-schools of Athens and examines students' perceptions of politics, while at the same time explores their responses to an artistic, learning experience that interacts with their own initiatives, group decisions, and socio-artistic actions. Following this methodological route that integrates both an interventionist and an interpretive interest, the fieldwork is developed as a dialogic action between the ideal conception of ensemble theatre making and the real conditions that are encountered in the educational contexts. In this context, the analysis and the interpretation of the data provides information about the ways in young people perceive arts and politics, the ways in which they experience and develop collectiveness and active participation as well as the ways in which these perceptions determine their citizenship skills. Finally, the impact of ensemble theatre process is examined in relation to the above mentioned perceptions and conditions of political socialisation.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis examines the ways in which an ensemble-based model of theatre learning can contribute to active citizenship education. In this context, a range of political theories offers an ideal, theoretical framework for democratic politics and citizenship, which in turn inform the principles, practices and aims of the ensemble theatre curriculum and pedagogy of this study. The research praxis of this project took place in two public secondary schools in Athens and explored the potential of the ensemble-based model of theatre learning through Sophocles' *Antigone*. My research aspires to explore the possibilities and limitations that ensemble-based theatre learning can entail for different educational environments and with different social groups of young people. Therefore, the whole endeavour aims to describe a process in which democracy and citizenship are defined in ideal terms, are integrated in an educational theatre process, and are developed in real, contemporary contexts of institutional education. This means that the epistemological and the methodological background of this thesis is informed by theoretical approaches which stress on the task of the social sciences, both to reflect critically in social contexts and to plan improving interventions, while at the same time seeking to be informed and adaptive to the particularities of real-life contexts.

My interest in the subject derives from my belief that official education can play a significant role in the shaping of the political identity of young people, but that for a range of reasons this potential is not realised. Schooling is often viewed as a highly political practice, a socialising process that “embodies a vision of what a society wishes to become over time” (Ranson, 1994, p.11).

As Ladson-Billings suggests,

all education is citizenship education, since every society works to socialize its youth into the prevailing social system. (Spindler, 1987 cited in Ladson-Billings, 2005, p.70)

From this perspective, apart from the mission to meet national economic and technical needs, schooling is a socialising and politicising process able to shape wider attitudes, knowledge, beliefs and identities that underline socio-political order (Dewey, 1944; Greene, 2000; Ranson, 1994).

1.1 The Educational Paradox

This process – structured by ideological and practical mechanisms that are reflected in the form of curricula and pedagogies – seeks to familiarise young people either with innovative ideas, active learning and dynamic political identities, or with traditional patterns and passive political habitus (Ranson, 1994, pp.8-11). Consequently, the following dilemma emerges. Either education would be structured by curricula and pedagogies that envisage an “open world” in which “history” is a human “possibility”, or as a channeling of knowledge and possibility through “didactic”, one-dimensional messages (Greene, 1967, p.152). I admit that the dilemma would sound rhetorical for a range of theorists, educators and drama educators who enter this professional domain having a vision of seeing the world “big” and of constructing with their students knowledge “about how to live in the world” and re-create it (Greene, 2000, p.10; Hooks, 1994, p.15).

Nevertheless, the claims of a range of syllabi entail contradictions between the educational objectives they aspire to achieve, and the contents that they teach or the pedagogies they use to teach these contents. In the case of political and citizenship education, especially in secondary school, these contradictions are frequently

encountered in the Western world. The issue is that while the vital importance of an active public domain is emphasised, the overall educational experience prepares students to “match a pyramidal, hierarchical society” (Ranson, 1994, p.129). Whereas there is an “increasing concern” to “stem political disinterest” and apathy of the young, citizenship education often remains a matter of voting, obeying the law and paying taxes (Kiwan and Kiwan, 2005, p.142; Ladson-Billings, 2005, p.76).

[T]he paradox of attempting to use passive, irrelevant, noncontroversial curriculum and instruction to prepare students for active citizenship in a democratic and multicultural society is startling. (Ladson-Billings, 2005, p.72)

The aforesaid contradiction that entails denial of fundamental political possibilities can be seen at work in the Greek National Curriculum of the Secondary School, which offered citizenship education – until recently¹ – as a core module only in two grades of the secondary school. These modules are *Social and Political Education* and *Politics and Law*. A close reading of the textbooks for these two modules reveals a range of – more or less implicit – messages which treat citizenship as a national ideal, are related to ‘Hellenism’, or exclude notions of struggle and conflict from the political education agenda (Kiwan and Kiwan, 2005, p.139). Nevertheless, I shall not attempt such a close analysis, nor a detailed ideology critique on the particularities of citizenship education in Greece. Rather, I shall focus on a fundamental structure that renders the overall content of the module highly theoretical and technical, by providing very limited potential for students to engage meaningfully with politics in a real-life practical context.

¹ In 2008, the Hellenic Pedagogical Institute recognised the urgency of providing a sustainable and progressive curriculum for citizenship, while, in 2012, excluding the lesson from the core modules and setting it as an optional one.

This superficial character of citizenship education in Greek schools became sharply evident in 2008, when public riots interrogated the necessity and the effectiveness of citizenship education. In this context, the extent and the character of public protest led by young people necessitated the need for a transformation of the concept of political participation in Greece and, therefore, of the processes of “citizenization” (Tully, 2008, p.311).

1.2 Citizenship in the Context of the 2008 Riots

The ‘events of December’, as we refer to the riots that took place in this period in a number of Greek cities, are considered a forerunner of the generalised frustration and anger of citizens which were variously manifested throughout the severe economic crisis that ‘marked’ Greek reality in the following years (Sevastakis, *Avge*, 5/12/2010). These events began on 6 December 2008, when a sixteen-year-old-boy was killed by a policeman. The reports contradict each another, but the majority of witnesses agreed that after a verbal clash between a group of teenagers and two Special Guards (a police unit whose task is to safeguard public property), one of the policemen shot the teenager. The defense witness claimed that the Special Guard fired to intimidate, while eyewitnesses claimed that he shot the boy on purpose. This event exasperated young people and shocked Greek public opinion. As a result, several protests took place in various Greek cities, and the sequence of events that followed took the form of civil disturbances which lasted two months.

Students all over Greece occupied their schools and university buildings remained under students’ occupation for a month. Several demonstrations took place outside police stations all over Greece and outside the parliament in Athens. On 10 December, the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) and the Civil Servants

Confederation (ADEDY) organised demonstrations against the new austerity measures introduced by the government. A number of demonstrations took place in various Greek cities, one of which brought together more than 12,000 protesters (18 December in Athens). Although it was a peaceful demonstration, it became violent when a small group of protesters started to throw rocks and fireballs at the police near the parliament. A series of similar events was organised almost every day in different cities in Greece until the end of January, when the occupations of schools and universities also ceased. The graffiti that dominated the walls of the cities read “December was not an answer; it was a question” (Avge, Sevastakis, 2010). Some of these disturbances were characterised by violence, such as burnings of cars and buildings, especially in the centre of Athens, outside the Greek parliament. This violence overshadowed the significance of the events in the consciousness of some people and provided an excuse for some parts of society to condemn them. However, it can be argued that the polity should reflect seriously on the causes of these events should reflect on the progression of these events more responsibly.

In the conference, ‘Historians reflecting on December 2008’ (2010) – two years later – Professor of History Vasilis Kremmydas argued that the events cannot be seen as a simple reaction against the murder of the boy (Kremmydas, 2010).

It is a fact that, in that period, a request for change was made. Change in something. Obviously, to me, in society. [...] It expressed a long-term pressure felt by the youth which manifested itself as a reaction to a member. I would not call that revolt. Because I believe that “revolt” is something organized; because it has an organised character which leads towards a specific direction. In this case, as far as I can tell, it was not something like that. I would call it an “outburst” or “riots”.

He also argues that the significance of this “movement” – as he comes to characterise the events of December – would have been greater if its violent aspects had been avoided. Overall, the ‘December events’ can be viewed in direct correlation with the need for citizenship education, because they demonstrate that even if ‘apathy’, ‘disinterest’ or ‘cynicism’ are overcome, there are further conditions that must be met for the practice of active citizenship. These riots can be viewed as means for the educational system to realise that young people are left with a single course of action, namely, anger and violence, when society neglects their needs and denies their rights, and when education does not provide them with the necessary channels for meaningful communication and skills for collective action. These events can be viewed as phenomena that reinforce the concept of citizenship as an active process, as a “fluid and pliable set of social practices” under continuous revision and re-creation (Nicholson, 2005, p.22).

From this perspective, the institutional education agenda should move on from the teaching of a “static set of rights and obligations” and proceed to more holistic learning models that enable participants to gain actively constructed knowledge instead of theoretical information (Wallace, 2001, p.28). Therefore, “factual knowledge about the institutions of government or the holders of specified political offices” should be replaced by a wider political agenda – “shared across the curriculum” (Noddings, 2005, p.123) – that aspires to *citizenization* through “the practice of politics in all its forms and sense” (Elmer, 1977, p.177). At this point, it must be noted that the aforesaid inter-curricular dimension is essential for such an endeavour. I strongly agree with Noddings that citizenship education should infuse the whole curriculum:

The reason for this is not that new and specialized courses are not desirable but, rather, that the crowded condition of the school

curriculum makes it likely that such additions would be (reluctantly) rejected. (2005, p.123)

From this perspective, “a school-wide commitment to include such material in the curriculum” is suggested that will encourage the interaction of various modules to respond to the wider political needs (*ibid.*). Social studies, humanities or arts curricula determine the ways in which students shape reality and view the world. Therefore, they can be determinant for students’ wider realities and “must bear full responsibility for citizenship education” (*ibid.*; Greene, 2000; Stanley, 2007; Eisner, 2005).

1.3 The Potential of Arts and Theatre in the Curriculum

In this study, arts education is viewed as providing essential learning opportunities for citizenship, owing to the possibilities that its imaginative worlds offer. In this context, it is argued that arts curricula provide young people with the potential to develop their critical and imaginative capacity of contemplating alternatives (Zipes, 2009; Greene, 2000), to cultivate dialogic and empathetic skills (Sennett, 2012; Nussbaum, 2010), or to acquire critical skills with regards to the construction of meaning (Eisner, 2002; 2005).

Theatre education, belonging to the broader category of arts education, possesses with the aforesaid socio-political potential, while it is further valued for integrating this potential in an actively experienced, social process of world creation (Nicholson, 2005; Winston, 2004; Neelands, 2003; Fleming, 2001; Gallagher, 2000; Kempe, 2000; Bolton, 1992). Drama education is often approached as a political art form with a potential to transform or intervene. Brecht based his work on this potential and claimed that

[i]n 20 years of activist theatre I do not believe I have raised anyone’s consciousness, or liberated them, or brought them new understanding. I have, however, been changed with and through

others, and they I hope, with and through me [...] in theatre, as in life, we develop one another. (Brecht in McDonnell, 2005, p.73)

More recently, Kershaw analysed the “alternative theatre movement” (1992, p.5) which adopted a “deeply political approach to theatre” by being “committed to bringing about actual change in specific communities” (*ibid.*). In these more overtly political appropriations of the theatre, there is an explicit hope that what we view on stage will prompt us to “do something about what we see, to conceive new laws for instance; in short, to do politics” (Kelleher, 2009, p.13).

This transformative potential of the art-form is increased in the context of educational theatre owing to the active participation of students in the process of world creation (Nicholson, 2005; Neelands, 2004; Gallagher, 2000). The value of this learning experience lies neither in the final product, nor necessarily in its ultimate meaning:

[W]hatever in the artifact may be called the unity of its meaning is not static but processual, the enactment of antagonisms that each work necessarily has in itself (Adorno, 1977, p.175-176 cited in Zipes, 2009, p.80).

The processual and active character of these ‘antagonisms’ that each performance entails is experienced by students through a social process that permits them to discuss and enact all the possible ‘ingredients’ that the creation of an imagined world contains (*ibid.*, p82). Nevertheless, this potential of the arts and the theatre should not be viewed as an unambiguous enterprise. As Nicholson argues, “drama does none of these things automatically” because “theatre is not necessarily an instrument for change. It depends in the spirit in which these things are used” (2005, p.24). A range of thinkers viewed theatre as a medium of propaganda, as an

attempt to “stop discussion and inculcate belief exclusively in its message” (Stanley, 2006, p.24).

1.4 The Reproduction Viewpoint

The work of the outstanding figure of applied theatre, Augusto Boal, is strongly connected to the democratic and emancipatory aspects of drama. His philosophy, practice and techniques of forum theatre have contributed significantly to the development of drama as an emancipatory process for the participants. In the first chapter of *The Theatre of the Oppressed*, “Aristotle’s coercive system of tragedy”, Boal examines the Athenian tragedy mainly through Aristotle’s *Poetics*. In this framework, Boal develops his theory on tragedy, according to which, Athenian tragedy was an oppressive, political institution which aimed to propagate the values of the Athenian regime that, in turn, cannot be considered to be democratic (Boal, 1998):

Tragedy imitates the actions of man’s rational soul, his passions turned into habits, in his search for happiness, which consists in virtuous behaviour, remote from the extremes, whose supreme good is justice and whose maximum expression is the Constitution. (p.23)²

In this context, nature – and therefore man as a part of nature (seeking perfection) – uses art and science to achieve or “correct” their course towards it (*ibid.*, p.9). Politics is the superior art form that rules all the relations among men, while the rest of the minor arts “are subject to, and make up, that sovereign art” (*ibid.*, p.11). In this Aristotelian context, the highest degree of perfection is virtue, which “cannot be

² It is essential to note that Boal interprets and analyses tragedy through some ideas and concepts of Aristotle’s broader thought, without close readings to tragic plays.

found in the extremes” but “somewhere in the middle ground” (*ibid.*, p.15). Each art and science has its corresponding virtue, and the sovereign virtue which corresponds to politics is justice (*ibid.*, p.21-23). Justice in the Aristotelian context mirrors the fifth-century Athenian logic, in which justice and law are both created and address the “superior beings”, who are the Athenian citizens (*ibid.*, p.23). In this line of reasoning, happiness exists in obeying the laws and the art of tragedy functions as an oppressive constitution that propagates obedience to the laws (*ibid.*).

From Boal’s perspective, the tragic plays aimed to create this effect for the Athenian audience through the hero’s *hamartia* (tragic flaw) and final *catastrophe*. The outcome for the hero, who by enacting the *hamartia* is led to his *catastrophe*, is intended to evoke in the audience, who identifies with him, feelings of pity and fear. In this way, Boal argues that the spectators feel pity for the characters and are themselves afraid to act like them or react in other ways against the laws. *Catharsis* functions as purgation for the potential *hamartiae* of the Athenian citizens, as “purgation of all antisocial elements” (p.46). Boal emphasises the need for an established social ethos and reality for this system to work, because during revolutionary periods there is no such stable and one-dimensional system of values that would condemn this non-canonical habit of the hero. In this analysis, Boal constructs a theory for the oppressive political function of tragedy in the established and undemocratic Athenian regime. Tragedy is viewed as a medium used by the ‘superior human beings’ who determine the laws in order to keep the rest of the Athenian citizens and non-citizens (women, slaves) oppressed. In other words, he provides an analysis that views tragedy as a medium of reproduction of the dominant order and values.

It has been argued that Boal’s argument on tragedy is of Marxist origins. It can be argued that this Marxist ideological framework is apparent in Boal’s approach, which

considers tragedy as a tool for the reproduction of and submission to the dominant ideologies. The Marxist perspective becomes more evident if one views Boal's theory in relation to some foundational texts of Marxist thought. In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1970) Louis Althusser based his theory on Marx's writings on art and society and further developed his analysis on the conditions of production. In his analysis, the concept of ideology is central because, as Althusser himself explains, in order for us to make sense of his theory we must be able to distinguish not only between state authority and state mechanisms, but also between the repressive state apparatuses and other, distinct institutions (1970, p.83). The Marxist philosopher calls these other institutions *Ideological State Apparatuses* (ISAs) because they do not belong to the governmental, administrative or juridical state's mechanisms, but they manifest themselves in the form of religion, education, family, arts and letters and sports (*ibid.*). They aim at reproducing the ideology of the ruling class, not through violence but through persuasion (Althusser, 1999, pp.83, 88). ISAs, such as schools, religious institutions or arts have the ability to re-produce the ruling class's ideology without explicit propaganda, but through its 'natural' integration to their contents, structures and practices. They transform social dictates into abstract, moral orders and, hence, they create the impression that social roles are chosen freely (Althusser, 1999). Boal's theory on the political role of tragedy in classical *polis* has, in my opinion, parallels with Althusser's theory on the ISAs, since it reveals the ways in which the art of tragedy reproduces the ruling class's ideology and represses any exceptional or subversive actions.

In a similar but not identical theoretical framework, Pierre Bourdieu also analyses mechanisms of reproduction within institutional education and its structures. According to Bourdieu, education and "Pedagogic Actions" have been used as one of

the primary instruments for the imposition and justification of the existing social hierarchies which accommodate the demands of the powerful social classes (Bourdieu, 1977; Eggleston, 1974). The dominant classes privilege their members in two ways: they arbitrarily impose their culture as objectively valued and redistribute it to them (Bourdieu, 1977). The taste of the privileged is considered to be ‘universal’, and, therefore, it is legitimised in society and in schools. The privileging of this culture perpetuates inequality and the means of its distribution reproduce its elitist character.

1.5 The Re-creation Viewpoint: The Outline of this Study

Acknowledging the aforesaid criticisms and risks that arts and theatre education entail if employed in a propagandistic or reproductive way, I suggest and explore a re-creative process for theatre and for citizenship education that focuses on the active, dialogic and imaginative possibilities that theatrical performance often offers.

Chapter two: Literature review

The first part of the literature review approaches democratic politics and citizenship based on Castoriadis’ theory of self-instituting society, on Habermas’ theory of communicative action and on Arendt’s reflections on the public sphere as constituted by speech and action. The second part of the literature review attempts to view the interactive process between the democratic politics in fifth-century Athens and the function of Athenian tragedy as a democratic institution. In this context, I review the development of Athenian democracy and discuss the role of tragedy as a self-reflective democratic practice. The third part of this chapter defines the ensemble principles that underlie my approach; locates the curricular and pedagogic background of the latter in the context of educational knowledge according to the educational knowledge codes of Bernstein; and, finally, justifies the choice of the conventions-approach for the designing

of the lessons and of Sophocles' *Antigone* as the point of departure for students' theatrical and political explorations.

Chapter three: Methodology

The methodology chapter presents the epistemological framework of this study and the ways in which pragmatist critical theory, as developed by Habermas, informs the knowledge construction of this study. Moreover, the methodologies that guided and organised the research praxis are considered in relation to the questions and the character of this research project. This section explains, firstly, the ways in which interventionist dimensions from political action research and hermeneutic elements from case study research were combined for the needs of this inquiry. Secondly, the methods that were employed during the fieldwork for the collection of data are analytically discussed. Finally, the methods of data analysis are examined in order to communicate to the reader the reasoning that was followed in the interpretation of the data and the thematic categories (codes) that organise my interpretation. I discuss the methodological limitations throughout this chapter.

Chapter four: Data analysis

In the chapter of data analysis, I examine the ways in which the ensemble-based learning functioned within two different school environments. The case analysis of the first school examines the function of ensemble-based theatre learning in a school located in a working-class area, with a group of fifteen-year-old students in the context of the *Elements of Theatre* module. The case analysis of the second school examines the ways in which the project was perceived and developed in an arts high-school with a sixteen-year-old group of students in the context of the module *Ancient Greek Learning: Ancient Poetry and Literature: Sophocles' Antigone*. In both cases, the analysis aspires to

present the interaction of ensemble theatre-making with the educational and theatrical habitus of each classroom. Moreover, the overall analysis aims to reveal the ways in which different contexts re-created the ensemble model of theatre-making, and, in turn, to give insight into the ways in which this approach to the theatre informed the theatrical and political development of the participants.

Chapter five: Conclusion

The closing chapter of the thesis provides some final reflections on the development of the entire praxis in both schools: I adapt my initial working hypothesis according to the case studies. In this framework, the differences and the particularities of each case mutually inform the overall conception of this study. In the conclusion, the possibilities for further research – as they emerged from the fieldwork – are identified.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Demarcating Democracy and Politics

As has been referred to in the prologue of this study, the vagueness of the term democracy as a practice and domain of study, and the complexity of the regime and its different forms over the years, has led to a multiplicity of ways in which it has been approached by different schools of thought and/or political ideology. In a similar way, in the everyday practice, multiple qualities have been connected to the notion of politics exercised within the various contexts of democracy; these are often distorted by being identified either with strict political ideologies, in the best case, or with political parties and their interests, in the worst. Therefore, it is essential to make clear the meaning of democracy and politics in the context of this study. In this context, it is the theoretical perspective implied in the political theories of such political thinkers as Cornelius Castoriadis, Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas, that constitute a basal frame for the development of my idea about democratic politics. Additionally, some further considerations from other thinkers such as James Tully, Richard Sennett and Chantal Mouffe will collaboratively inform this analysis.

Castoriadis' most interesting philosophical approach provides a powerful and dynamic theory on democracy, since he defines politics as “a collective activity whose object is the institution of society as such” (1983, p.272). Similar is the approach of the other political theorists as they recognise the importance of the self-institution of a society through negotiation and re-creation of its norms. This preoccupation, especially valued by Habermas, is viewed by him, as a process that happens through rational communication between citizens and its subsequent, commonly-agreed-upon action (Habermas, 2004; 2006). Arendt also places great significance on public participation

through speech and action, which is to be identified with most “genuine” democratic exercise of politics. All three political thinkers, and others who will be further discussed, examine politics as an active participation in our common world, in what is common for us, instead of that which “intrigues among social groups over interest and position” (Castoriadis, 1983, p.272).

2.1.1 Reflecting on Past Forms of Democracies: A Political Enterprise for Today

Castoriadis organises his political philosophy by reflecting on the ‘model’ of the Athenian democracy of the fifth century. This approach is neither generated by an admiration for the Athenian polis nor based on its presumed excellence. As he characteristically explains, Athens should not be either a model for imitation or an anti-model for rejection, but a germ for reflection (1983, p.268-269). This approach betrays a particular interest as it provides a contemporary study of an older form of democracy with a political ‘message’ to be diffused in the present. Instead of viewing ancient democratic politics from a solely historical angle, Castoriadis proposes to view this process as an opportunity for reflecting on our own terms of democracy and inform them with possibilities of transformation. In this context, even if we remain the same we will know or believe to know the reason for our sameness. Actually, sameness is in question here for Castoriadis, who believes that a new understanding provokes even a slight change of our previous state of being (*ibid.*). Thus, he politicises this kind of study of the past when is followed by reflection, an inextricable quality of any democracy, as will be further revealed.

Justifying further his perspective, Castoriadis considers that the study of older democracies – if oriented to our own change or informed choice to remain the same – is more effective when it concerns societies, civilisations or cultures that reside in our own

tradition. Being descendants of this culture and of its structural meanings, we easily feel familiarised with its particularities (Castoriadis, 2007, p.68). However, it can be a ‘deceptive’ feeling when we assume a false closeness with our ancestors’ culture, and hence when we overlook the temporal distance that separates us from their different organisation, and orient ourselves towards their world rather than our own (*ibid.*). In this context, in order to understand and benefit from such a democratic ‘moment’ of our past, it is useful to penetrate harder its *social imaginary significations* (*ibid.*), with which we share a strong genealogical connection. The *social imaginary significations* and subsequently the *instituted collective representations* are key concepts in Castoriadis’ theory of social construction and consequently of his political theory (*ibid.*; 1999, p.12). The *social imaginary significations* denote the way in which reality, human life or the world are signified in a certain society (Castoriadis, 1987). The collective representations of the world are the constituted “images” of these significations which educate the population, the children of that society, and indicate what is good, wrong, and for which ‘things’ they deserve to live or to die (Castoriadis, 1999, p.12). In a broad sense, both concepts refer to the constituted reality of a society.

2.1.2 Why Athenian Democracy: What is Useful for us?

The reason why Castoriadis chooses to study and reflect on Athenian democracy is that it coincides with the first time when people realised that they were themselves the creators of their reality, that “men are the polis” (*ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις*) according to the suggestion of the Athenian *weltanschauung* recorded by Thucydides (*ibid.*; p.38). The Athenian society was the first to realise that the law was neither divine nor messianic, and that the truth does not derive from tradition nor from revelation (*ibid.*, p.12). This is because both tradition or the hope of revelation preclude the possibility of “action and thought in *this* world”, and therefore impede critical reflection and political choice (1983,

pp.272-273; 2007, p.70). What people realised at that historical moment is that there are not out-of-world factors that determine their lives and define their realities. In this context, what Castoriadis underlines for the contemporary political practice setting out from the Athenian paradigm, is what Hanna Arendt also regards as *worldliness* (1958). For Richard Sennett this sense of worldliness not only stands apart from the religious factors that might have been the main reason for such a fatalistic attitude, but also to a passivity regarding politics, similar to ours, since it perpetuates the stance that there are others who govern and are thus responsible for our lives (Sennett, 1977).

Elaborating on the aforesaid observation inspired by the Athenian democracy, Castoriadis locates two social imaginary significations that were initially conceived and practised within the specific democratic context. For the first time in human history the notion of criticism (*κρίνειν/crinein*) and choice (*ἐπιλέγειν/epilegein*) acquired their social, radical substance (Castoriadis, 2007, p.70). In more contemporary terms, one can argue that critical reflection explicitly challenges the existing instituted representation of the world, initially in the form of a philosophical question, and subsequently in the form of political choice made through what could be considered collective action. This move is clearly depicted in the process of Athenian citizens judging and altering their laws. The problem transcends the question of fairness or unfairness of a specific law and moves on to further inquiries such as “what is for the law to be right of wrong, that is, what is justice?” – a question posed by Athenian citizens themselves and not by their clergy or any exterior political powers (Castoriadis, 1983, p.272; 1999, p.22). This interdependent relation of *crinein* and *philosophhein* might also explain the reason why the origin of philosophy and of democratic politics coincide (Castoriadis, 1999, p.25; Castoriadis, 1983, p.272), a fact also noticed by Arendt (Hansen, 1993, p.51). Into this progressive movement between the two questions enters a philosophical dimension,

which is ‘inherent’ in democratic politics and distinguishes the instituting from the instituted society, as the former is (actively) generated and able to practise criticism and choice (1999, p.27).

2.1.3 The Self-instituting Society: The Democratic Vision

The instituting society occupies a remarkable position in Castoriadis’ political reasoning as it signifies the collective ability of a society to create its own terms of living:

The self-institution of society is the creation of human world: of “things”, of “reality”, language, norms, values, ways of life and death, objects for which we live and objects for which we die – (1983, p.269).

He additionally explains that in a democratic context, self-instituting is a process, expressed as an activity of changing basic laws and other constitutions with reference to the needs and the given circumstances (1999, p.27). The capacity for renewing and reforming the social constitution instead of just negotiating the roles and the relationships within it, the ability to devise institutions and therefore reinvent society, is the most fundamental principle of any democracy according to Castoriadis (*ibid.*, p.38). This social reinvention is based on four different qualities, interwoven in a cyclical way in Castoriadis’ conception of democracy that we can now fully discuss, these qualities concern creation and imagination, action and collectiveness.

For Castoriadis, the creative role of the imagination of the individual is found in their contribution to the position of new forms and types (εἶδος/*eidos* 1983, p.269). But in the “social-historical” field this contribution is made possible only when connected to a collective undertaking in the form of transforming, or even ‘updating’ a norm, an institution, a law or any other social structure (1987, p.168, p.369), – that is the

instituted social frame, the circumstances and the media it provides. It must be noticed that this collective substance is not significant just for the perspective it gives to individual imagination to have the above manifestations, but also for the way it enriches and develops it. Thus, imagination makes possible what is not and what has been socially imagined creates new meanings and constitutes new representations of the world within imagination (Castoriadis, 2007, p.67).

In this context, Castoriadis' core notion, the *social imaginary*, could be in a simplistic way defined as the ability continuously to re-imagine collectively to be able to visualise a better social reality and act to this end (Castoriadis, 1983). More accurately, for Castoriadis, *social imaginary* is identified with the aforesaid instituting society not in an abstract way; rather, in the way of a society capable of endlessly producing *social imaginary significations* through which individuals are able in specific times and places to constitute specific institutions. For example, specific theatre institutions of a specific era are products of the social signification of theatre of this era. As Castoriadis argues, from this "magma" of social significations that the democratic social imagery produces, we could 'sample out' two most important social imaginary significations, of the social imagery itself: social speech and social action (Castoriadis, 1987, pp.369-370). Their importance lies in their decisive role in perpetuating and organising further creation of social imaginary significations. Actually, it is only through the speech and action of individuals that social imagery (that is, self-instituting society) manifests itself and makes 'visible' the social imaginary significations in concrete forms (institutions) (*ibid.*, p.146). But this creative quality of speech and action, which for Castoriadis are *sine qua non*, is re-creative: the existing institution that allows speech and action to exist is altered via their impact (*ibid.*, p.372). That's why for Castoriadis, after "the institution

of society is the institution of social doing and social representing/saying” (*ibid.*, p.360); or, in other words, as the last lines of his *magnum opus* conclude:

The self-transformation of society concerns social doing – and so also politics, in the profound sense of the term – the doing of men and women in society, and nothing else. (*ibid.*, p.373)

Taking into account the above, it is thus clear why for Castoriadis the self-institution of society is not a *reproduction* of established norms and institutions but *recreation* through them. Along this line of reasoning, a democratic society is a self-creating society, in continuous recreation of itself (Castoriadis, 1983; Tully, 2004). Thus, the collective undertaking of the re-creative speech and action and the instituted social frame complement each other and should mutually generate one another. This collective undertaking creates the instituted social frame, which, in turn, ‘destined’ for such processes, encourages collective initiatives, even through the very fact of its existence. For Castoriadis, “real” democracy is finally an *instituting*, “permanent process” (Castoriadis, 1983, p.275).

What obviously stands out as the most important part of this ‘cycle of creation’ of society is the notion of action and speech. This perspective corresponds closely to Arendt’s consideration. For her too, action and speech are “coalescent” and inter-complement each other in the political domain. Action always signifies a beginning, and, at the same time, a realisation which is identified with the actor in his/her public appearance in the common world of people (1958, pp.177-178). The latter reveals the personality of this actor by explaining its motives and intentions (*ibid.*, p.179). In this way, in Arendt’s political philosophy, action is connected to human initiative and undertaking. And, although it transcends its own intentions bearing unpredictable consequences, it is for this same reason that it provides the human world with new

possibilities (Arendt, 1958, pp. 167-168). This dimension of a new beginning, of something that starts in the world owing to the human initiative, is what actualises politics, what creates events, oeuvre and history in the human world (*ibid.*). Its outcomes persist and bring a dimension of beginning, a quality of change and re-creation. Thus action can be viewed, in this context, similarly to the way Castoriadis approaches it, as creation and, indeed, as self-creation; this, in the political space, acquires the form of self-institution, “the positing of a new *eidos*, a new essence, a new form in the full and strong sense” (1983, p. 269).

For Arendt, speech and action have a core collective dimension. Even further, she postulates that speech and action are “entirely dependent upon the constant presence of others” (1958, p. 23), and in this sense are indissolubly related to public and publicity. Elaborating on this, she progressively argues that it is the common *inter-est* – literally what stands between individuals – which unifies people and permits them to co-exist and create together, rather than their supposed common nature (*ibid.*, pp. 182-183). But here Arendt adds one more quality of action, the significance of which increased following the publication of her own magnum opus, *Human Condition*. For her, speech and action, being only public, imply a certain “courage” without which these activities would not be feasible. And, therefore, in order for someone to speak or act, they must be ‘heroic’ in the sense of “leaving one’s private hiding place and showing who one is, in disclosing and exposing one’s self” (*ibid.*, p. 186). That is why for Arendt action links closely to freedom. Castoriadis, for his own part, when examining the collective substance of action, stresses not what it takes for the actor to act in public, but the way the actor acts towards others when action is to take place. For him,

we term praxis that doing in which the other or others are intended as autonomous being considered as the essential agents of the development of their autonomy[.] (1987, p.75)

Action, through the intersubjective dimension of autonomy it implies, acquires its intersubjective, and eventually, social character:

It is because autonomy is not the pure and simple elimination of the discourse of the other but the elaboration of this discourse, in which the other is not an indifferent material but counts for the content of what is said, that an intersubjective action is actually possible[.] (*ibid.*, p.107)

Intersubjectivity here means above all a reciprocal impact. In this process of *prattein* (doing), it is not only the transformation of the real world that is achieved. Action, being the bearer of innovation, transforms its subject:

[I]ts subject, too, is constantly transformed on the basis of the experience in which is engaged, which the subject does or makes, but which also makes the subject. (Arendt, 1958, p.77)

This quality of action, to transform not only the world but the actor him/herself as well, completes its all-creative character. It also sheds light on Arendt's belief that, as it is absorbed in an already-existing "web of relationships", with the web of speeches and actions of other people (1958, p.181), neither is the actor its exclusive producer, nor are its consequences identified with the actor's intentions (pp.184-185). In this context it thus becomes clear why for both thinkers action and democracy go together. And it is not accidental that both thinkers link instrumentalisations or predeterminations of action to a kind of decrease of democratic procedures in our times.

Writing in *The Philosophical Discourse(s) of Modernity* on Castoriadis, Jürgen Habermas criticises both Castoriadis and Arendt, writing that when viewing action and

self-institution of society, they are focusing on very particular and, thus, rare moments of history when the ‘material’ from which the institutions and the norms are ‘made’ is ‘fluid’, and therefore changeable, according to the collective initiative (Habermas, 1987, p.329). It can be argued that at this point Habermas actually problematises Castoriadis’ conception of social imagery, interrogating its dimension as quasi transcendental. The unrealistic aspect he views is the presentation of self-instituting social imagery as a continuous ontological genesis of new ‘worlds’, a process within which, in the end, “praxis thereby loses precisely the traits of human action” (*ibid.*, p.332). Habermas concludes that this foundational conception of society – despite Castoriadis’ appeal to the collective nature of action – eliminates the possibility of real inter-subjective practices that accord with a socialised agent (*ibid.*, p.330). Consequently, it can be argued that his own theory of *communicative action* explores a more pragmatic, inter-subjective ability that *coordinates* action among the differently goal-directed actions of individuals; that is to say, it explores the conditions of communication that permit agents to decide together, so that their actions can be an outcome of their mutual understanding of a situation and their agreement. As he makes clear,

[t]he communicative model of action does not equate action with communication. Language is a means of communication which serves mutual understanding, whereas actors, in coming to an understanding with one another so as to coordinate their actions, pursue their particular aims. (Habermas, 2004, p.101)

In this general “mechanism for coordinating action”, speech preceding action comes forth and in its core dialogic quality functions as the founder of the commonly decided action (Brand, 1990, p.15). Because of this kind of inter-subjective ground of action – a more down-to-earth notion of collective action than that of Castoriadis and Arendt – it can be said that Habermas considers acting individuals not just something more than

actors cut off in their aims, but, borrowing from communication theory, *participants* in an inter-subjective process.

2.1.4 A Dialogic Approach to Democracy: Communicative Action

In his theory of action as a process where, as has been said above, “actors, in coming to an understanding with one another so as to coordinate their actions, pursue their particular aims”, Habermas starts from a basic distinction of *social action* according to the mode of the aforesaid coordination:

Concepts of social action are distinguished, however, according to how they specify the coordination among the goal-directed actions of different participants: as the interlacing of egocentric calculations of utility (whereby the degree of conflict and cooperation varies with the given interest positions) [...] or as reaching understanding in the sense of a cooperative process of interpretation. (Habermas, 2004, p.101)

The former concept of social action implies issues of power. In this case, one’s will attempts to be imposed through concealed manipulation or through openly exercised power. This action is called strategic. The latter concept of social action, in which an expressed will is being accepted in more valid ways, is called *communicative action* (Baxter, 1987). It must be noted that a third concept of action, one that is solely success-oriented and does not seek any modes of coordination at all, is called *instrumental action* and is considered by Habermas to be non-social (*ibid.*, p. 81, f.4).

As follows from what has been presented so far, what are critical in the communicative process – where a *speaker* addresses a speech act to a *hearer* so as to establish a ‘situation’, a mutual understanding of it, and, finally, to coordinate their action – are the conditions by which the hearer accepts this speech act and agrees to coordinate his own action. Namely, the *validity* that this speech act *claims* to bear in

seeking to be accepted, which would avert it from being arbitrary, biased, or just a lie. This kind of validity is not claimed only by the speaker so that their speech act is accepted, but by the hearer as well, in order to accept it, in the sense that s/he might doubt it by appealing to different conditions of validity. *Validity claims*, that a speaker raises with their speech act, are always related to their world (lifeworld, see below), if: they “fit” or “misfit” with this world, namely with the *objective (facts or existential presuppositions)*, the *social* (normative context of interpersonal relations, namely *norms*) and their *subjective (experiences)* world (Habermas, 2004, p.1, 120, 134; Habermas, 2006, pp.99-100). Hence, finally, Habermas defines that “an actor who is oriented to understanding in this sense must raise at least three validity claims with his utterance” in relation to his world which consists of the ‘material’ of this utterance, namely: *truth* concerning factual propositions; *rightness* concerning the normative context of actions so that they are legitimate; and *sincerity* or *truthfulness* for the public manifestation of their experiences (Habermas, 2006, p.99). Actually, in communicative action, both actors, as they try to reach an understanding, “through relating to a world, reciprocally raise validity claims that can be accepted or contested” (*ibid.*). For example, a proposition like “I am going to change clothes” implies validity claims such as: I have other clothes with me; changing is permitted in the specific place; and I really mean to change clothes. These are all claims that could be contested with possible propositions such as “but you have no other clothes with you”, “changing is not allowed in this place”, “this is a lie, because, at the end, you are not going to change”. These claims could be counter-contested and so on. Habermas explains that

it is a rule of communicative action that when a hearer assents to a thematized validity claim, he acknowledges the other two implicitly raised validity claims as well – otherwise he is supposed to make known his dissent. Consensus does not come

about when, for example, a hearer accepts the truth of an assertion but at the same time doubts the sincerity of the speaker or the normative appropriateness of his utterance[.] (*ibid.*, p.121)

What is important in this procedure is the possibility for the hearer to *criticise* validity claims of the speaker by raising their own validity claims during the attempt of the mutual definition of a situation and mutual understanding. Giving an example of a validity claim concerning the social world and the norms it imposes as laws, Habermas notes

[s]uch a claim can be rejected only by criticism. [...] One who opposes directions is referred to existing regulations and not to the mere fact of penalties that can be expected if they are not followed. And one who doubts the validity of the underlying norms has to give reasons – whether against the legality of the regulations [...] or against the legitimacy of the regulation – that is, against its claim to be right or justified in a moral-practical sense. Validity claims are internally connected with reasons and grounds. (Habermas, 2004, p.301)

For Habermas, this possibility of critique based on further validity claims, until the point that speaker and hearer come to an agreement on what claim is valid, is a procedure conducted purely by the exchange of reasonable objections and arguments, by reasonable discussion, and that is why he considers rationality inherent in communicative action (Baxter, 1987, p.45). Validity claims, as exposed above, guarantee rationality and identify with it:

Communicative reason finds its criteria in the argumentative procedures for directly or indirectly redeeming claims to propositional truth, normative rightness, subjective truthfulness[.] (Habermas, 1987, p.314)

Furthermore, since communicative action is by nature rational, an interaction is communicative only in the sense that actors coordinate their action on the basis of the inter-subjective recognition of validity claims (*ibid.*). Hence, Habermas develops the concept of *communicative reason* as a key ability for the cultivation of an inter-subjective consciousness, rationality and the coordination of action.

From the above analysis of communicative action always related to the individual's world (objective, social, subjective), it is evident that communicative action cannot be conceived outside what Habermas calls *lifeworld*, its *background*, the “horizon within which communicative actions are ‘always already’ moving” (Habermas, 2006, p. 119). Habermas considers these two notions “intercomplementary”. Drawing from certain philosophical-sociological traditions that define lifeworld as a somehow transcendental site (*ibid.*, p.126) of which individuals acquire consciousness only in fragments *thematized* in the form of specific *situations* they encounter in their lives, Habermas tries to pass to a “concept of the lifeworld [that] refers to the totality of sociocultural facts and thus provides a jumping-off point for social theory” (*ibid.*, p.136).

This is the everyday concept of the lifeworld, which entails an additional theoretical tool, that of *Narration*:

Narration is a specialized form of constative speech that serves to describe sociocultural events and objects. [...] Narrative practice not only serves trivial needs for mutual understanding among members trying to coordinate their common tasks; it also has a function in the self-understanding of persons [...]. For they can develop personal identities only if they recognize that the sequences of their own actions form narratively presentable life histories; They can develop social identities only if they recognize that they maintain their membership in social groups

by way of participating in interactions, and thus that they are caught up in the narratively presentable histories of collectivities.
(*ibid.*)

Hence, this more tangible “everyday concept of the lifeworld”, exposed to individuals through narration, leads Habermas to a differentiation of the lifeworld into three “structural components” (homologues of what are conceived his objective, social and subjective world by the individual – Habermas, 2006, p.120): *culture*, as the “stock of knowledge” transmitted to an individual culturally, by which it interprets and defines situations; *society*, “as the institutional order of society” – namely, laws, institutions etc.; and *personality*, the individual’s patterns of motivation and the stock of competences for speech and action that Habermas calls “structures of personality – (Baxter, 1987, p.47). Habermas explains these “structural components of the lifeworld”:

By culture I mean the stock of knowledge upon which participants in communication draw in order to provide themselves with interpretations that will allow them to reach understanding. [...] By society I mean the legitimate orders through which participants in communication regulate their membership in social groups, and thereby secure solidarity. Under personality I understand the competences that make subjects capable of speech and action, and thus enable them to participate in processes of reaching understanding, and thereby assert their own identity. (Habermas, 2006, p.140)

Proceeding to explore how lifeworld is being *reproduced*, Habermas postulates that corresponding to the lifeworld’s structural components “culture”, “society”, and “personality” are the reproductive processes of *cultural reproduction*, *social integration*, and *socialization* in which education is placed (Baxter, 1987, p.49). It must be noted that cultural reproduction has a clear impact on the other two reproductive processes. For

Habermas, *reproduction* in these forms stands in a bilateral way, and does not emphasise the Marxist implications of the notion:

The reproduction of the lifeworld consists essentially in a continuation and renewal of tradition, which moves between the extremes of a mere reduplication of and a break with tradition.
(Habermas, 2006. p.139)

It is in this context, bringing to mind both Castoriadis and Arendt that Habermas can now locate agency and postulate that

[a]ction, or mastery of situations, presents itself as a circular process in which the actor is at once both the initiator of his accountable actions and the product of the traditions in which he stands, of the solidary groups to which he belongs, of socialization and learning processes to which he is exposed.
(*ibid.*, p.135)

Therefore, Habermas admits that the world of life determines individuals entering the communicative action. More particularly, he recognises that if we are to examine individuals from this spectrum,

[o]f course, interaction participants then no longer appear as originators who master situations with the help of accountable actions, but as the products of the traditions in which they stand, of the solidary groups to which they belong, and of the socialization processes within which they grow up. (Habermas, 1987, p.299)

A statement like this means that the individual has various predeterminations when entering into action, and, concerning the “society” and “personality” components of the lifeworld (that is “institutional orders” and “personality structures”); Habermas recognises that (these components of lifeworlds) “can indeed restrict the actor’s scope for initiative” (Habermas, 2006, p.134). However, Habermas argues that during

individuals' interactions, these restricting elements of lifeworld draw back. What finally prevails in the process is the communicative rationality, inherent in all individuals through their communicative ability. Habermas declares, on the question of the possibility of free will within communication, that "I conceive of persons as beings who exist 'in the space of reasons' (Sellars) and are receptive to reasons" (Habermas, 2007, p.86), and contends that the "nature and nurture" of individuals are put aside when entering into communication (*ibid.*). In this way he expresses his faith in communicative rationality

inasmuch as it brings along with it the connotations of a noncoercively unifying, consensus-building force of a discourse in which the participants overcome their at first subjectively biased views in favor of a rationally motivated agreement[.] (Habermas, 1987, p.315)³

This procedure ends in a gradual *rationalization* of the lifeworld. As communicative action liberates its rational potential, the individuals become reflective and critical of their lifeworld. This takes place because the 'material' that individuals' lifeworlds provides them cannot support the validity claims. Therefore, this 'material' is reflected because it confronts communicative rationality. More particularly, as Habermas notes "[t]he lifeworld is given to the experiencing subject as unquestionable" (Habermas, 2006, p.130). And he goes on:

³ In an even more Marxist implication, Habermas recognises that each lifeworld tends to reproduce, apart from its so far analysed "symbolic" conditions, its material conditions of existence (that is "organize, carry out, and maintain processes of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services" – Buxter, p.52), through the goal-directed actions by which they intervene in the world the participants of the lifeworld. This implies reproduction to the detriment of other "conflicting" lifeworlds. However, and in this case, "these instrumental actions are interlaced with communicative ones insofar as they represent the execution of plans that are linked to the plans of other interaction participants by way of common definitions of situations and processes of mutual understanding" (p.322). In other words, the process of communication has its beneficial impact even in those cases of strategic actions, which finally have to adapt themselves to the conflicting interests through communicative processes.

It is only in becoming relevant to a situation that a segment of the lifeworld comes into view as something that is taken for granted culturally, that rests on interpretations, and that, now that it can be thematized, has lost this mode of unquestionable givenness. (*ibid.*,p.132)

That is, when entering into communication, “[w]hat was until then ‘taken for granted’, is [...] exposed to tests in communicative action” (*ibid.*, p.133). In other words, as individuals use ‘material’ from their common lifeworld in order to come to an understanding or agree on a plan of action, they submit it in dialogue, which is a testing process, and as a result they renew and/or change it. Their viewpoints, being expressed in order to reach an agreement and coordinate action, are, even slightly, transformed and developed by each other’s opinion (Outhwaite, 1996, p.146). In a more macroscopic view, according to Habermas, lifeworld becomes reflective in/by itself. This means:

- a) concerning culture, cultural reproduction does not just reproduce myths and traditions, but also reflects on them;
- b) concerning society and social integration,

“legal norms and political goals neither depend solely upon tradition, nor arise merely from the will of a charismatic leader, but develop through discussion and debate among the public”;

- c) concerning personality, socialisation depends on a “pedagogicalization” of education, methods of education and training become objects of investigation, criticism, and revision” (Buxter, 1987, 50-51).

Finally, after examining Habermas’s theory of communicative action, it is argued that through communicative preparation of action, and by the fact that it derives from common understanding, democratic structures and individuals’ identity as citizens are developed; first, because they cultivate their inter-subjective rationality – and therefore

their collective consciousness – and second, because they participate in the norms’ creation or transformation. Making (validity) claims for their world, individuals involved in communicative action are able to discuss a norm, reflect on its rightness and act in order to re-define it or reconstruct it (Brand, 1990, p.16-17), in what Castoriadis would call social institution. Castoriadis himself acknowledges that instituted society has its ways of *self-alteration* (Castoriadis, 1987, p.372), and that while “it is true that, as such, the institution that is posited in each case can exist only as a norm of self-identity, as inertia and as mechanism of self-perpetuation”, after all “alters itself through doing and social representing/saying” (Castoriadis, 1987, p.372).

This means that society alters itself through the re-creational potential of speech and action. It is in a similar way, then, that when reproduction of society takes place through communicative actions, we end up with what Castoriadis conceives as re-creation.

2.1.5 Public Sphere

For the above analysed political system to be realised, and for collective imagination to be developed, articulated and turned into organised speech and action, an instituted frame is required. As it derives from different political theories, the public sphere is this frame which emerges from and provides a society with political activity and interweaves with the already-instituted society. According to Castoriadis, the essentiality of an instituted public space for a self-instituting regime consists of its quality to “belong to all” (*ta koina*) (Castoriadis, 1983, p.280). Drawing again from ancient Athens, where transformation of the norm, law and institutions could only be materialised through the possibility of speech of all citizens in the agora (*ibid.*), he points out that a self-instituting society is impossible without collective involvement in the public sphere.

Arendt approaches the public sphere similarly, and views it with equivalent significance. The notion of public, she argues, professes the world to the extent to which it is common for all of us (Arendt, 1958, p.52). This common world does not denote the natural environment, but is directly connected with the human artefact, the outcome of human (political) ‘activity’, and is destined to accommodate further human (political) activity. In this context, the reason why both Castoriadis and Arendt set the public sphere as a democratic prerequisite lies in its function as a public forum where ideas or oeuvres of public value can find a space for appearance. Arendt underlines the value of publicity, stressing the distinction between human activities that ‘belong’ to the public and those belonging to the private sphere. In general terms, her analysis, influenced by the model of the Athenian society, associates the human preoccupation with the living, with the functions of the private sphere. On the other hand, she ‘places’ human speech and action in the sphere of “publicness”, since they substantially demand, as has already been explained, the presence of others and a “web of relationships” with them. It is therefore in the case of the public sphere, too, that speech and action acquire a constitutive role. Arendt clarifies:

The space of appearance comes into being wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action, and therefore predates and precedes all formal constitution of the public realm and the various forms of government, that is, the various forms in which the public realm can be organized. (Arendt, 1958, p.199)

The importance of this speech and action notion of public appearance is particularly underlined by Arendt, since, if it is to be dispersed or deactivated for any reason, the public sphere will cease to exist. For Arendt, public sphere has a potential character and not a permanent one, and political communities are destroyed if they lose the dynamic of

an active, instituted public sphere, which is equal to a state of non-speech and non-action. The courage demanded, according to Arendt, in order to speak and act, and thus to participate in the public sphere, must be correlated with this kind of publicity that accompanies these activities, especially when a society tends to impose “obstacles” that avert or predetermine them. However, this should furthermore be related to one more substantial quality of the public sphere and the “visibility” it renders, which is the plurality of positions that its existence presupposes. For Arendt, it is clear that “[b]eing seen and heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position (*ibid.*, p.57).

Thus, the public sphere is not mere visibility, but plurality. And that is why “[t]he end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective” (*ibid.*, p.58). In this context, the potential for things to ‘be publicly appeared or heard’ must not be seen only as a condition of participation but also of equality. Anything that can be said or presented in front of others is viewed by everyone and, respectively, anyone has the right to speak or act publicly.

In this philosophical context, it is Habermas that has been the major theorist of the public sphere. For him, the public sphere, consisting of various, often conflicting, publicities, is the only “space” where communicative action can be conducted. That is why the political publicness which realises all the prerequisites of communication which in turn can shape the opinions of citizens is essential for a normatively conceived theory of democracy (Habermas, 1999)

As a result of this fundamental role of the public sphere for democracy, what is at stake for Habermas is not the pre-determined will of each individual but the process of its formation, in the process of communication itself. Having explored and brought to

light the historical and sociological conditions of the formation and transformation of the public sphere in modernity, Habermas has confronted the results of the gradual ‘democratisation’ of the notion of the public sphere and therefore of citizenry in comparison to ancient Athens and the agora:⁴ within the mass democracies, publicity and the public sphere, and thus public opinion, can be harshly manipulated via distortions and exclusions by the all-mighty mass media, which constitutes an erasure of the conditions of true communicative actions. Therefore, what is at stake is the safeguarding of the processes of publicity and communication which is to be achieved through appropriate forms that institutionalise these processes (pp.36-41).

The importance of publicity, as explained in this overall frame, is that, as Arendt argues, it reports and entails “a political culture in the broadest sense” (Hansen, 1993, p.64). A society, able to keep issues in the public eye, manifests a society preoccupied with its political life. At this point the self-instituting element of a Castoriadian society can be observed again. Along a different line of reasoning Habermas – and from another angle Arendt and Castoriadis – all three theorists seem to agree that “public space implies both a type of activity and a context within which it takes place” which is also an outcome of human activity (Hansen, 1993, p.72). In other words, the public sphere generates politics, participation in common, and action while at the same time, emerges from the political structures it generates and accomodates.

⁴ Making the leap between the two historical periods and comparing their political structures, what could be first observed is the ‘democratisation’. In the Athenian polis, the citizens were men born in Athens of Athenian parents (or father only). They were the sole participants in the public sphere (demos, agora) and therefore the only ones who could participate in the political becoming of their polis. This right, by definition elitist, was solely dependent on birth and did not permit any change to the lives of people who lived in Athens. In the latter period of European enlightenment, participation in the public sphere was again provided under certain conditions, but the criteria were not so rigid. Establishing education and property as factors for admission into the public sphere, the people of the era were provided with, typically, the opportunity to claim this right throughout their lives, instead of being excluded from birth (1999, p.85). Habermas explains that this phenomenon was rare, almost impossible until the beginning of the nineteenth century; however, it provides an opportunity of negotiation and therefore of possible inclusion.

2.1.6 Citizenship

A second level at which the three major theorists of this study – Castoriadis, Arendt and Habermas – are ‘encountered’ is in the awareness that all processes of social imagining, self-instituting, rational debate and participation in public analysed thus far create an entire identity for individuals: that of active citizens. Mouffe, another outstanding political theorist, defines citizens as agents who “see themselves as belonging to the same political associations, as sharing a common symbolic space” (2005, p.20) and reveals the consciousness of being members of a collective as a primal characteristic. Tully, although approaching active citizenship from a different perspective (that of recognition), explains that for any identity to be ‘acquired’, it must be ‘carried’ from a first person perspective, acknowledged and wanted by individuals (2004, p.92-93). Along the same line of reasoning, Castoriadis argues that citizenship is not a matter of academic knowledge, but a way of living formed in and through the everyday education of the polis (1983, p.280-281). This education must not only concern the formal rules, but, more importantly, the general ethos of a society (Castoriadis, 1983, p.275).

Citizenship

involves becoming conscious that the polis is also oneself and that its fate also depends upon one’s mind, behaviour, decision; in other words, it is participation in political life (Castoriadis, 1983, p.281).

All the above analysed theories agree with the fact that only the everyday experienced education of people within the appropriate institutions and practices enable individuals to develop their identities as citizens, exercise their potential and create active instead of passive democratic rights. This self-awareness and self-formation enables people to

identify with the democratic society and in this sense permits them to understand and make their reality their own creation and, in turn, to re-create themselves as citizens in this process (Tully, 2004). Finally, in the structural relation between public sphere and citizenship, Castoriadis rectifies a frequent misconception concerning this kind of participation in the public sphere, and therefore in politics. Using again the Athenian 'case', he underlines the importance of continuous involvement, inherent in the everyday life of the polis. Appearance and participation not only concern the proclamation of law, nor the moments of the final decisions, but the "presuppositions of the decisions, to everything that leads to them" (Castoriadis, 1983, p.280).

2.2 Polis and Athenian Tragedy

In a recapitulation of the different philosophical theories for democratic politics and citizenship, it is viewed that some key concepts structure a shared ground about principles and practices. Therefore, the process-character of democratic politics that is realized by equal participation through speech and action is emphasised by the above analysed theories. Castoriadis defines the continuous self-institution and social re-creation according to the citizens' social imaginary as the culmination of democratic politics. In this context, the creative power of social imaginary lies in its generation from citizens isonomic participation in the public sphere and from their collective initiative to imagine things differently and act accordingly. In a similar way of reasoning, Arendt considers speech and action the most political practices of human condition as they constitute public sphere and history itself. In a different philosophical approach, Habermas develops a theory of communicative action in order to argue about the essentiality of intersubjectivity in the conduct of political action. In this context, he emphasises the transformative power that communication entails for the interlocutors, for their subsequent actions and hence for the normative framework that surrounds them. This kind of transformation corresponds to the notion of re-creation in Castoriadis' context and constitutes the essence of democratic institutions.

In the context of his theory of democracy, examining the Athenian democracy as a "germ" for contemporary reflection (See section 2.1.1) Castoriadis ascribes to the performances of tragedy a deeply political essence. The whole institution is viewed as a possibility for Athenians to reflect on their political reality through the re-creation of their myths. In particular, as it will be analytically examined in this chapter, performance of tragedies could be considered to have functioned as a form of publicness where citizens were gathered in order to make meanings of their world.

This approach cannot be viewed as a dominant approach either to tragic play or to tragic theatre in general, it depicts though a significant trend in classical studies. In this context, and as far as this study is concerned, corresponding to Castoriadis' suggestion that Athenian democracy constitutes a "germ" for reflection for our democracy today, it can be argued that the institution of theatre could in the same way be a stimulus for us to reflect on a possible relation between theatre and politics. More specifically, it could constitute a stimulus for reflection on the ensemble theatre practice and on young people's participation in drama in relation to an identity of citizen.

Therefore, after the theoretical examination of procedures of democratic politics, this section aims to consider their 'practical' dimensions through a historical and conceptual review of the evolution of the Athenian democracy during the fifth and the fourth century (BC). Following Castoriadis' reasoning with regards to the significance of the self-instituting processes of Athenian polis, the re-creative political and institutional development of Athens will be approached. This endeavour will be based on a range of historical events that determined the Athenian democratic process as well as on analysis of the citizenship practices and mentalities that this process included. In the second part of this section the role of theatre as a democratic institution of paramount importance will be examined. This part aspires to demonstrate the ways in which the performance of tragedies not only mirrored/integrated the democratic practices but also reflected on the democratic infrastructures and re-created them. In this context, the procedural elements of the theatrical competitions will be presented in order to reveal the civic character that tragedy as an institution entailed. Furthermore, the structural elements of the tragic play (speech, action, re-created myth and hubris) as well as its public quality will be considered in relation to its democratic potential.

2.2.1 Making Meanings from the Context

Several historians (Cartledge, 2009, pp.12-14; Rhodes, 2006, p.7; Mossé, 2003) credit Athenians

with having discovered or invented politics in the strong sense – that is – communal decision-making in the public sphere on the basis of substantive discussion about issues of principle as well as public operational matters (Cartledge, 2009, p.14).

Moreover, they seem to agree that the “culmination” of democracy (Rhodes, 2006, p.7) during the classical age of Athens⁵ is a continuing process which starts from the archaic years, and more specifically towards the end of the seventh century (Rhodes, 2006, p.7; Mossé, 2003, p.81), passes through the Golden Age of Pericles and ends with the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC. Historians, approaching the Athenian democracy, remark on its progressiveness, towards *isonomia* (equality before law) and *isegoria* (equality of free public speech) two words which are often used as synecdoche of *demokratia* (democracy) (Cartledge, 2009, p.61-62; Mossé, 2003). That is because, as Castoriadis notes, they constitute par excellence the conditions for the development of the main quality of citizenship, namely the equal participation in the public and political offices (Castoriadis, 2008, p.126).

Beginning from the 7th century BC, the economic power of Athens was mainly accumulated in the hands of the aristocracy (*Eupatrides*) who owned the land and therefore all the economic benefits from exports (Bonard, 1983). The collection of wealth provided them with significant control over the rest of the population of the polis (Mossé 2003, p.82). This control often culminated in land-workers or landowners with a small extension of properties being enslaved by the *Eupatrides* owing to debts owed

⁵ (500-323 BC for some scholars Cartledge,2009 and 478-323 BC for others Rhodes,2006)

(Bonard, 1983). On the political level, the heads of the families of the Eupatrides alternated in the highest administrative office of *Archon* and staffed the supreme court of *Areios Pagos* (Mossé, 2003, p.83). Merchants and tradesmen possessed wealth, but, being excluded from the decision making process, were leagued with the lower classes against the establishment of the *Eupatrides*. The tension between the two fronts escalated until it became one of the most sanguinary civil conflicts of history, during the last decade of the sixth century (Bonard, 1983; Ober 1996). Finally, the two sides compiled a council agreeing to call upon Solon as moderator and legislator, and enabling him to go through several reforms that would ‘recreate’ the life of the polis according to the new demands for equality (Ober, 1996; Bonard, 1983).

The three most important reforms of Solon lie in the introduction of the law of *Seisachtheia*, on the *volunteer principle*, and on the judicial institution of *Heliaia* (a judicial session of the *Ecclesia of Demos*, namely of the Assembly of People). The *Seisachtheia* law (literally meaning “raising the burden”) cancelled the existing debts of a citizen and forbade the use of personal freedom as collateral in all future debts (Cartledge, 2009, p.48). This meant that Athenians were not enslaved any more – legally - inside the polis of Athens owing to debts. As Castoriadis underlines, this regulation completed a rather uncompleted concept of freedom and established the basis of free participation in politics (Castoriadis, 2008, pp.125-126). The *volunteer principle* on politics indicated that any citizen who wished had access to read the decrees and other decisions that were publicly written, and that any citizen who wished could bring a lawsuit on matters of importance to the Athenian community (Cartledge, 2009, p.49). Finally, the foundation of the Court of *Heliaia* functioned as a forerunner of a system of democratic courts because it decreased the power of the archons - who until the time were the ones who decided individually on many lawsuits - and gave the right of appeal

against their decision (*ibid.*, p.50). It remains, though, very unclear exactly which economic classes of citizens were entitled to membership of this new court (*ibid.*). In general, he made wealth the sole qualification for participation in offices (while previously one's lineage constituted the sole criterion) and thus enabled a wider range of (rich) men to challenge the land-owning aristocrats (Rhodes, 2006, p.5). While Solon didn't satisfy the lower classes' demand for equal redistribution of land and of social justice (in contemporary sense), he gave the lower classes of Athenian citizens, the *thetes*, the right to participate in the *Ecclesia of Demos* and in some occasions to Courts (Mossé, 2003, p.89). Overall, it can be argued that Solon's reforms functioned as a "proto-democratic" period in Athens, as a preparation for the constitution of democracy credited to Cleisthenes by the majority of theorists (Cartledge, 2009, p.51; Rhodes, 2006).

Cleisthenes' reforms in 508/7 BC constituted what has been widely accepted as democracy (Cartledge, 2009; Rhodes, 2006; Mossé, 2003; Wiles, 2000; Meier, 1993;)⁶. Cleisthenes created a new system of configuration of the citizen body and restructured the population in ten tribes, thirty *trittyes* ('thirds' of tribes) and one hundred and thirty-nine demes (Rhodes, 2006, p.5), which supplanted the older organisations and reconstructed the basis of the Athenians' public and political life (*ibid.*). It can be argued

⁶ From 546/5 to 511/0 Athens was subjected to the tyranny of Pisistratus and his sons. Despite the connotation in which tyranny is affiliated in modern times, in Ancient Greece until the 4th c., the concept had a different meaning. The tyrants of the Greek world were not grand rulers as the oriental monarchs, but closer to the leading aristocrats figures presented by Homer (Rhodes, 2006, p.2). It is only after Plato and Aristotle in the fourth century that the tyrant was seen as an autocrat. Pisistratus and, his son Hippias ruled mildly, trying to uphold Solon's system of governance, at least, in theory (Cartledge, 2006, p.48). In this context, the earlier development of Athens was not suspended due to tyranny but was almost respective to its democratic precedent, particularly in the military and economic domains (Rhodes, 2006). Pisistratus is also considered to have significantly contributed to the status of the *demes*, which were officially introduced some years later by Cleisthenes as basic administrative units that defined citizens, substituting a citizenship based on kinship (Mossé, 2003, p.99). The years of tyranny ended when the Alcmaeonid family, and more specifically Cleisthenes, overthrow Hippias with accordance to the Athenian citizens.

that the importance of this new organisation of the polis lies in the fact that it abolishes groupings based on blood relations. Athenians, after this reform, were no longer registered in the polis' catalogues just with their names and fathers' names, but also with the declaration of the tribe in which they belonged (Cartledge, 2009, p.61). Ober argues that the invention of the *demos* constitutes the basis of Athenian democracy as it is through the demos that the Athenians officially became citizens, by becoming conscious members of a wider community of the polis (1996). It enabled the Athenians to acquire a new common identity, this of a citizen (Meier, 1993). This is because *demos* gained political importance, and in this way, belonging to a demos became a status of increasing importance.

Moreover, the *demes* were the origin for the ten tribes which, in turn, constituted the basis of the new central administrative Council of 500 (*Boulai*) (Cartledge, 2009, p.61; Rhodes, 2006, p.5; Ober, 1996;). The Council of 500 was composed by Athenian citizens, fifty from each tribe. In order for the abuse of the administrative authority to be avoided, fifty citizens from each tribe were annually selected by lot, with restriction on reappointment (Rhodes, 2006, p.9). The issues of the polis were discussed in the Council, which prepared the issues to be discussed in the *Ecclesia of Demos*. Ecclesia of Demos, the citizens, voted pro or against the Council's propositions. Before this voting, an officer would call "tis agoreyein bouletai?" (*τίς αγορεύειν βούλεται* meaning "who wishes to speak?"), and any citizen could speak on the issue stepping on a flat stone (*bema*, which in Greek means step). Castoriadis underlines the notion of *parrhsia* (*παρρησία*), which meant to speak publicly with courage and sincerity⁷ (2008, p.128). Therefore, the whole process took place without the contribution of professional administrators or any kind of experts because it was of paramount importance for these

⁷ It is uncertain to which extent the average of citizens would after all stand up and speak.

responsibilities to be shared among citizens (Rhodes, 2006, p.9, 58). The fact that participation in public offices was based on rotation of the tribes and on lot among their members is considered by Castoriadis as deeply democratic because each citizen used to exercise a public office at least twice in his lifetime (Castoriadis, 2008, p.129). Finally, it is underlined that apart from the Generals – who were elected – no other administrative or juridical office could be exercised for more than one tenure.

Officials were appointed annually, often (...) with limits on reappointment to prevent a few men from becoming too powerful; there were no professional administrators and no professional lawyers, but administration and justice were included in the responsibilities shared among the citizens (Rhodes, 2006, p.9)

This reform of the regime initiated a period in which Athenians acquired political conscience, and, believed through self-institution in the potential of the polis to be self-creating. It can be argued that this was also the feeling of the times. According to Herodotus - whose work constituted the “earliest ancient source to offer a precise moment for democracy’s invention” - it was Cleisthenes who “invented the tribes and democracy for the Athenians” (Herodotus in Cartledge, 2009, p.56). Indeed, Cleisthenes, elaborating on Solon’s reforms, abolished the privileges related to lineage and wealth and ensured *isonomia* and *isegoria* in order to establish the practical realisation of equality (Mossé, 2003, p.10). This was not only in terms of the application of the laws, but also regarding the process of its creation (Castoriadis, 1983; Cartledge, 2009). From this historical moment, apart from voting for or against a law, Athenians citizens were responsible for and equal to one another in participating in and publicly speaking during its formation (Meier, 1993).

Cleisthenes' reforms represent a more substantial concept of democracy. On the one hand, the reforms functionally institute the concept of citizenship in the political life of Athens; on the other, they create the public sphere which is constitutive both for the practice of democracy and for the development of political thought (Cartledge, 2009, p.12,14). In other words, the reforms create the basis for the political as a space of collective debate and decision making by equally participating citizens (*ibid.*). By extension, this form of politics permits the emergence of political theory (or philosophy, in the above analysed sense of *philosophein*), as a culmination of political thinking on how the states should be governed and how citizens should participate (Cartledge, 2009, pp.12-13; Rhodes, 2006, p.7). As a range of theorists note, this possibility enabled Athenians to create the foundations not only of democracy and political consciousness, but also of the belief in human potential (Cartledge, 2009; Rhodes, 2006; Meier, 1993;).⁸

This new mental infrastructure determined the rest of the Athenian course towards democracy through the further reforms of Ephialtes and reached its peak on the age of Pericles (Bonard, 1983). This process is characterized by further

⁸ The major historical event that reassures and further develops this belief in collective human actions is the Persian War (490 BC, 480 BC) (Mosse, 2003; Chatelet, 1992). After Cleisthenes reforms, in 508/7, and before entering in the classical period, 479 BC, Athenians, in collaboration with other Greek city-states, organize a collective enterprise that subverts the natural order of things, encourages the participatory character of their politics, and suggests further belief in human ability to determine its reality (Chatelet, 1992). It is essential to realize that Athenian's victory in the Persian Wars is both a result of its previous political life and a profound reason for its further development. In this sense, it can be neither interpreted nor appreciated discontinuously of the previous and the following periods of Athens. For the majority of the archaic period, the dominant human beliefs of the Greek world were based on a natural or a religious order of things in which the human initiative could not act decisively, and mostly contrarily to this natural 'will' (Chatelet, 1992). From the early sixth century when lower classes' demands created a new state of things in the Athenian polis, until Cleisthenes' reforms, one can observe a gradual development of human potential regarding their politics. As a range of historians argue, the Persian Wars, coming after this period of preparation, act as the decisive intersection that poses a new course of things, in human thought (Chatelet, 1992, Mosse, 2003, Meier, 1993, p.8, 38). They function as a catalyst, and change the state of the Athenian mind from the archaic to the classical era. According to the natural laws the Persian powers would, doubtlessly, not only win but completely destroy the Greek *poleis* that were much smaller in terms of population and military tools (Chatelet, Mosse). In this context, the victory of Greeks is perceived by Athenians as the triumph of collectively organized strategy, and therefore of human potential and action (Chatelet, 1992; Mosse, 2003).

“democratisation” of institutions, namely further participation. In 462, Ephialtes removed the *Eisangelia*⁹ -- a procedure for charges of major offences against the state – from the power of Areopagus¹⁰, and ‘transferred’ it to the jurisdiction of the Council of five hundred, of the citizens’ vote in the assembly, and on the jury-court of Heliaia, constituted by six thousand Athenian citizens (Rhodes, 2006, p.36; Mossé, 2003, p.197). In the direction of democratisation of the juridical institutions, simpler cases, like lawsuits, were no longer decided by the archons. Although Solon’s reforms enabled citizens to lodge an objection in *Heliaia*, the archons were responsible for the initial decided outcomes. By the later fifth century, these cases were transferred straight to Heliaia, and tried by all its members, while the role of the archon was restricted to the conduct of a preparative inquiry (Rhodes, 2006, p.37). Finally, because there were cases in which the Areopagus limited the popular power, Pericles abolished the right of Areopagus to veto the decisions of Heliaia (Bonard, 1983, p.233).

The reforms of Pericles did not only concern the judicial institutions, but were extended to the broader structures of the political procedures. In the first place, Pericles enlarged the scale of citizens’ participation in public offices. Comprehending that the third class of Athenian citizens (the equivalent of petit-bourgeois and tradesmen with restricted incomes (Bonard, 1983, p.231) were not able to participate as officers because they had to work for their livelihood, Pericles introduced a form of salary for those who participated in the Council of 500, in Heliaia, or who serve as archons and soldiers (*ibid.*). Only the participation in the assembly, which was considered a citizenship duty, remained a political activity without public payment. However, around 400 B.C. a salary was provided for the participation in Ecclesia of Demos was introduced as well from

⁹ Treason, attempting to overthrow the constitution, often translated as ‘impeachment’.

¹⁰ the supreme court to the office of which only higher classes had access

other politicians as Agyrrios and Heracleides (*ecclesiastic salary*).¹¹ It is important to note that politics was becoming an issue of increasing importance in the Athenian polis during the fifth century and, therefore, preoccupation with the commons from an official position became a very demanding responsibility (Cartledge, 2009; Rhodes, 2006). The Council of 500 was meeting every day, while the assembly was meeting four times in each period of the ten *prytanies*¹² (Rhodes, 2006, p.58). The *psephismata* (voting, decrees) for the major decisions often lasted for two days, owing to the extended debate during the first day, that transferred the decision-making to the following one (*ibid.*). In order for the Athenians to be able to *crinein* their collective actions, reconsider their decisions, reform or ‘correct’ law, they called upon the institution of *graphe paranomon* which could be used to reform or subvert a law or a decree that did not work as expected or was considered illegal or expedient after the first period of its operation (Rhodes, 2006; Castoraidis 2007).

2.2.2 Speech and Action in the Athenian Politics

A sense of shared responsibility among citizens and participation in the public sphere is underlined by the work of different scholars on the Athenian democracy (Castoriadis 2008, Meier, 1993; Cartledge, 2009). As original (Thucydides, *Pericles Funeral*) and secondary sources (Cartledge, 2009, p.16; Meier, 1993, p.36-38) manifest the political activity and ideology during the fifth century disapproved any sense of forbearance or passivity. History and politics were created by citizens’ actions. As it was discussed in the previous section, from a philosophical perspective, Castoriadis develops his theory on social imaginary as an outcome of the Athenians’ collective actions,

¹¹ It must be noted that with such decrees, politicians aimed to gain recognition and power by people. Mosses argues convincingly on the fact that relations of dependence among rich citizens, politicians and lower classes (2003, p.136-138).

¹² A prytany constituted, each time, fifty representatives of each tribe who acted as the standing committee. Ten periods of meetings took place ten times per year and in each of them the fifty members of each tribe undertook the role of prytanneis.

resulting to self-institution (1983). Arendt argues that the essence of action lies in the newness, in the beginning it brings to the world. In its creative possibilities.

From an historical perspective, collective human action, when it becomes conscious self-creation, is viewed as signaling history, because it enables man to become historical, instead of a natural being. In *La naissance de l'Histoire : la formation de la pensée historique en Grèce* (1992), the historian François Chatelet argues that from the moment when Athenians realized the potential of human action in relation to human development, they became historical human beings. In this context, the period after the Persian Wars, being characterized by the great victories of Athens, becomes the historical passage from the archaic to the classical era. It is also the political moment when the belief in human action is increased (Meier, 1993, p.8). Through the achievement of previously 'unthinkable' completions, such as their win in Persian Wars, Athenians gain awareness of the human ability to organize and determine world (Meier, 1993). The achievement lies in the fact that the Persian military forces were much larger and stronger comparing to these of the Greeks. However, the smaller military forces of the united poleis of Greece proved more effective when they acted collectively and well-organized (*ibid.*). The realization that human reason and systematised collective action can transcend the size of the Persian forces was proved significant for the subsequent development of the Athenian polis (Mossé, 2003, Meier, 1993). It can be argued that this renewed awareness of the human potential is mirrored in Athenian political life and in the centrality that action acquired in its context.

Apart from the everyday participation, the significance of action becomes a criterion for each citizen's status. The famous extract from Thucydides' *Pericles Funeral Oration*, praise of the Athenian constitution, manifests the prioritization of action among the Athenian democratic principles:

“we alone judge the person who has no share in those [*ta politika*, active political life] to be not (merely) a quietist but useless” (2.40.2)¹³.

These lines can be read along with the following, which concerns the honorable burial way of the active citizens

“...the worth which had displayed itself in deeds by these men would be sufficiently rewarded by honours also shown by deeds
14,,

It can be argued that, these two phrases seem to condense the essence of action for the Athenian politics, as they reveal its necessity, on the one hand, and its significance on the other. Pericles notes that it is for their constitution, democracy, that identifies with polis, that those Athenians died. This underlines that for democratic politics to exist, citizens’ choice and responsibility to act is an inextricable part of public life (Cartledge, 1999; Meier, 1993).

Meier’s argument that “politics was rooted for the Athenians in action” derives mainly from the political procedures, analyzed in the first part of this chapter, that demanded active participation in order for decisions to be taken, for changes to happen and changes to be introduced by citizens themselves (Meier, 1993, p.38). The decision making processes which concerned laws, justice, issues of peace and war, could not let the Athenians a sense of delegation or duties and responsibilities (p.213). Athenians were ‘educated’ to participate and act directly due to the participatory character of their politics and according to the necessity of action that their culture and ethics implied (Cartledge, 2009, p.16; Castoriadis, 1983).

¹³ τόν τε μηδέν τῶνδε [των πολιτικῶν ἔργων] μετέχοντα οὐκ ἀπράγμονα, ἀλλ’ ἀχρεῖον νομίζομεν

¹⁴ ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔργῳ γενομένων ἔργῳ καὶ δηλοῦσθαι τὰς τιμὰς

Apart from the action-based dimension of politics, speech was a foundational practice of the Athenian politics. It is indicative that Athenian democracy of fifth century has often been characterized as an “oral” one (Green, 1994, p.2) due to its argumentative but also rhetorical tradition that is often noted by different theorists (Mossé, 2003; Wiles, 2000; Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988). This oral political culture formed or at least permeated all the decision-making procedures of the polis.

The ways in which the laws were instituted by the Council of 500 and in Ecclesia of Demos entailed speeches or debates between the citizens who were making new suggestions (Wiles, 2000; Meier, 1993; Castoriadis, Bonard, 1983). Based on these speeches or debates, the rest of the citizens had to vote the final decisions based on what was publicly discussed and on the ways in which different opinions were argued. Wiles, in particular, explains that there were three major forms of public discussion. The set-piece orations (prepared speeches, mostly encountered in the court), debating speeches in assemblies, due to the isegoria that permitted anyone who wanted to argue publicly, and long speeches (2000, p.55). Moreover, the agora constituted a space for discussion in the ordinary life of the polis. That is why, Pericles places speech next to action, considering it of similar importance:

we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and, instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all¹⁵.

Finally, it should be noted that although the Athenian democracy faced serious problems of demagogy, there were specific procedures such as the *graphe paramonon* (analyzed

¹⁵ καὶ οἱ αὐτοὶ ἥτοι κρίνομεν γε ἢ ἐνθυμούμεθα ὀρθῶς τὰ πράγματα, οὐ τοὺς λόγους τοῖς ἔργοις βλάβην ἡγούμενοι, ἀλλὰ μὴ προδιδαχθῆναι μᾶλλον λόγῳ πρότερον ἢ ἐπὶ ᾧ δεῖ ἔργῳ ἐλθεῖν

below) or even the ostracism (in its initial form) that permitted re-consideration of laws and decisions and, if necessary, structural changes.

2.2.3 Action and Self-limitation: Chaos and Hubris

The ancient Greek world was built on the awareness of the chaotic character of being (Castoriadis, 2007, p.257; Castoriadis, 1983, p.273). This idea, expressed primarily in Greek myths, was central among other social imaginary significations and determinant for the Athenian state of mind. According to Castoriadis, the idea of the chaotic nature of the world did not conduct to passive assumptions that foresee that human action is condemned to failure. By contrast, it oriented Athenians to creation.

Apart from the chaotic nature of the world, *chaos* is also encountered in human beings themselves and is expressed as “lack of positive correspondence between human intentional and actions, on the one hand, and their result on the other” (Castoriadis, 1983, p.284). Corresponding to this notion of chaos is the term *hubris*, widely known from its theatrical origins in Greek tragedy, interwoven to the idea of the excess of the ‘human limit’. Hubris is commonly understood and treated by the classicists as the action of the tragic hero that goes beyond his control and provokes a sense of imbalance in the world presented by the play. Castoriadis, studying this concept - which according to him bears a political dimension - explains that hubris expresses the lack of control of human action not only in terms of its outcomes but also regarding its meaning. The emphasis is therefore put on the unpredictability and the ‘autonomy’ of action which permits it to create things or meanings that the actor did not intend. The human being cannot always control the significance of his actions for himself or for others. Arendt’s theory on action, is relevant to this analysis, because it also insists on the sense of something new that action brings to the world while, at the same time, it recognizes its power to create the unexpected either in the positive or the negative sense.

Consequently, through its uncontrollable character, action bears the risk to become catastrophic for the actor and the others.

Examining the notion of hubris in relation to the human action it is essential to remark that hubris can only happen within a democratic and self-creating context in which, the limits are not established or indicated by external structures. Hubris is possible when citizens' choices and decisions determine reality (Castoriadis, 2007, 1983). In a despotic regime we cannot encounter hubris because the limits and the rules are fixed and unchangeable. In this context, if someone goes beyond the limits, he makes a violation or an illegal action which is something different from hubris. Hubris is possible only in a context where the limits and the laws are under a continuous process of renegotiation, transformation and re-creation. Only in this frame can human beings, individually or collectively, perform a hubris by voting for a law, taking a decision, or making a free choice. Hence, in this context of democracy there is the risk of hubris through an action that can be proved catastrophic for the polis. This kind of *direct democracy* that excludes control from higher authorities entails the risk of political hubris.

In this context, self-reflection and institutions of self-limitation were central for the good function of the Athenian democracy. The most characteristic of these institutions was the *graphe paranomon*. The *graphe paranomon* could be used to reform or subvert a law or a decree which was voted by the Ecclesia of Demos but was proven 'illegal' or inexpedient after the first period of its operation (Castoriadis, 2008, pp.203-206; Rhodes, 2006; Castoriadis 1983, p.283.). In this ways, "*demos* was appealing against itself in front of itself" (Castoriadis, 1983, p.283) and Athenians were able to reconsider their decisions and reform or 'correct' their laws.

However, it was not only specific political institutions, such as the *graphe paranomon*, or the initial form of *ostracism* that evidence Athenians' awareness for political self-reflection and self-correction. Athenians conceived hubris in a more macroscopic view. The 'dictums' 'Know oneself' and 'Nothing to excess' written on the Temple of Apollo at Delphi constituted principal democratic aims, central to political precepts inscribed at the symbolic centre of Hellenism (Cartledge, 2009, p.16).

However, there are cases – such as the imperialistic wars against city-states of the Delian League or Socrates' trial – that manifest severe political hubris decided and executed by the collective of citizens (Rhodes, 2006, p.60; Mossé, 2003; Wiles, 2000, p.48). These were to be reflected by Athenians through a more complicate and ideologically most powerful institution, that of tragedy. It is the institution that Castoriadis himself considers as the most important concerning an 'ideology' of hubris and self-limitation. The role of tragedy will be analysed further, in the respective section.

2.2.4 Three Steps to Democracy: Recapitulating Observations

Attending the above presented historical description of the different stages of the Athenian regime, and some of the ideological implications that underlie it, there are some recapitalizing observations that I would like to make, regarding the fundamental qualities of the Athenian political life during the classical period.

The first observation concerns the self-instituting character of the Athenian democracy, based on the participation of all citizens in political institutions. Indeed, the common feature of all the political institutions presented above (the Ecclesia of Demos, the Boule of 500, the judicial institution of Heliaia which came to involve some 6000 citizens for each decision) is a wide participation of citizens which legitimated minor

and major decisions in public affairs, attributing an authentic self-creating quality to Athenian politics. The positive aspect of this self-creation, of the “direct, unmediated and participatory” character of decision making and political action permits Athenians to develop a strong sense of their identity as citizens and, in this way, to make the polis a collective creation (Castroiadis 1983, Meier, 1993). It is participation in “a system which was calculated not to create a gulf between the authorities and the ordinary citizens” but to reassure that citizens will rule and be ruled in turn (Rhodes, 2006, p.61; Cartledge, 2009, p.13), that enabled Athenians to create this shared identity of equal and responsible citizens (Meier, 1993, p.20, 21) Finally, this sense of equal participation and responsibility by creating a shared identity and not an ‘official’ right, renders “politics not only institutional (what we call constitutional) but also cultural (a question of civic norms and wider problematization)” (Cartledge, 2009, p.13). That is why, beyond being a legal obligation, participation is honored by Athenians in its primal forms, namely public speech and action, which are deemed the heart of democracy.

The second observation is that of the evolutionary character of the Athenian regime. It can be argued that the continuous reforms give evidence of a process rather than an established character of the political domain. From this perspective, references to the Athenian regime would be more precise if they acknowledge its re-creational, instead of fixed, character. It can be argued that this progress is related to a progressive mentality regarding politics – the example of Athenians calling Solon for providing reformation is characteristic. Even if the reforms are introduced by outstanding political figures, such as Solon, Cleisthenes or Pericles, they cannot be viewed independently from the wider political concerns or demands of the Athenian citizens. As Ober (1996) and Bonard (1983) analyze, it was tensions among the Athenians citizens and collective demands for novelties that necessitated, or led to these reforms.

In this way, it becomes clear the reason why Castoriadis argues that one of the most democratic aspects of the Athenian polis is its self-creational and its re-creational character, that is its ability to socially imagine, create and re-create its politics and therefore, its reality. On the other hand, this form of politics in which citizens are directly involved in the whole scale of decisions, from judicial to legislative issues, from lawsuits to decisions of peace and war, entails the risk of relations of dependence as Mossé puts it, or of political *hubris* in Castoriadis' school of thought. This kind of *direct democracy* incorporates the lack of any sense of control from a higher authority or any entrenched rights and therefore entails such political risks. Hence, the third observation is what has been analysed as the "ideology" and institutionalization of self-limitation, based on a quality of self-reflection.

To conclude the presented review of some key moments of the regime of Athens and some observations that derive from it, is part of the attempt to contextualize the Greek tragedy, and to examine it within the frame of its overall culture. From this perspective, the various pieces of information regarding the structures of Athenian tragedy and its function in the polis, which will be analyzed in the following part of this chapter, might be more comprehensible and meaningful to the reader. In this framework, I would like to present the main procedures of the festival of Great Dionysia in which the contest of the performances of tragedy took place. These procedures imply similar structures of participation from the part of the citizens. I will also argue that tragedy refers to and uses two basic democratic practices, these of speech and action. Finally, I will examine the function of tragedy as a self-reflexive, self-controlling institution, necessary, as we have seen in the context of Athenian democracy.

2.2.5 Tragedy and Politics: Tragedy as an Institution of Democracy

2.2.5.1 Making Meaning from the Performance Context

One of the first observations that can be made of the Athenian tragedy lies in its public character that demanded citizens' participation, in the fact that it was "staged by and for the polis of Athenians" (Cartledge, 1997, p.3). This argument derives from the organisational structures of its performance and from the identity of the audience who attended the performances as citizens, rather than mere spectators.

The Great Dionysia took place during the spring, most probably in April, and according to the sources we have, it used to be one of the most important festivals of Athenian life (Goldhill, 2006). It constituted the biggest, public event as the number of people exceeded even the gathering of the assembly of Athens, in which only the whole of adult male population participated (Wiles, 2000, p.52). Its rituals depict a strict relation between religion and citizenship.

In the first ceremony, the *pompe* (procession) of the statue of Dionysus to a suburb called *Eleutherae* (Free) and back to the theater, *Ephebes* (young males on the point of the formal status of adult and full citizen duties) had the most important role. The process can be viewed as a symbolization of their prospective responsibility as citizens. In the theater, after the *proagon* (pro=before, the agon), the playwrights and the performers presented to the audience the subjects of the plays that would follow. (Goldhill, 2006) . Ten generals, usually outstanding military or political figures, made a libation and mentioned the names of citizens who had acted beneficially, in various ways, for the polis. Then, other cities of the Athenian empire gave tributes to the Athenian polis. This culture of publicness, detected by Goldhill (2006), Wiles (2000),

and Meier (1993) can be viewed as key principle of the Athenian democracy that was transferred from political to theatrical practices and vice versa.

Apart from the structures of publicity that permeated the Great Dionysia, citizens' participation in its rituals demonstrates the political character of Athenian tragedy. The attendance of the performances of tragedy can be viewed as one of the institutions that "turned a collection of men into a polis" (Wiles, 2000, p.51). Firstly, Goldhill notes, "The Great Dionysia, ceremonially and spatially, puts the city of display" (2006, p.60). The citizenship identity was emphasised by the mere geographical arrangement of the seating space of the audience which was organised according to the formal socio-political organization of the *demos* (*ibid*, p.59). The ten tribes of citizenry had different blocks of seats and there is evidence that each block was reserved by a particular tribe. Tickets, of the 4th century, that have survived, are inscribed with tribal names (*ibid.*). The seating arrangement did not only give the opportunity to the Athenians to sit tribe by tribe, but also to view themselves positioned as the citizen body (Green, 1994, p.8). This was further emphasized by the presence of foreigners who, while they were allowed to attend the contest, occupied a separated space as they did not belong to the citizens' body.

As it was mentioned, the performance of tragedy took place in the form of a contest (*agon*) between the plays which would be, at the end, rewarded by Athenian citizens (Castoriadis, 2008, p.333). Hence, whereas for the *metoikoi* (non Athenian citizens that lived in Athens) or the foreigners, the attendance of the festival was optional, it constituted a core activity for the citizens (Goldhill, 2006). The tickets of the poorest population who were unable to afford the expense, were paid by the *choregoi* (wealthy citizens who also sponsored part of other activities of the festival) (Goldhill, 2006, p.57) in the form of a donated fee called *theorikon*. *Theorikon* that enabled poorest

citizens to attend the performances can be viewed in correlation to the heliastic and the ecclesiastic daily salary that was paid to poorest citizens in order to be able to participate in the Court of *Heliaia* and the Ecclesia of Demos.

2.2.5.2 Performing Speech and Action:

The relation of tragedy to democratic politics does not remain in the meanings that derive from its organisational level. Part of this connection lies in the way in which tragedy integrates two interactive democratic structures of the Athenian polis: those of speech and action.

The analogy regarding the function of speech in the political and the theatrical context is apparent in some of the tragic plays' conventions. Public debates, interrogation of the 'opponent' or opposing long speeches constitute some of the practices transferred to tragedy from the ordinary political institutions of the polis (Wiles, 2000, Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988). The *agon* (debate between two heroes with opposing views) is an exemplary dialogic structure of tragedy that performs politics within the theatrical space because, based on *isegoria*, it enables the heroes of the play to employ different opinions with regards to a given subject, and therefore permits multiple perspectives to be considered by the audience. The agons are encountered in the majority of plays and do not remain in the personal differences of the heroes but spread on a variety of political issues regarding human values (between Creon and Antigone in Sophocles' *Antigone*), human potential and responsibility (Oedipus and Teiresias in *Oedipus Rex*) and others. As many theorists (Cartledge, 2009, p.19; Rhodes, 2006, p.39; Wiles, 2000; Meier, 1993, p.214; Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988) remark, the themes of the tragic plays are often related to the wider political context of the Athenian polis. It can be therefore argued that the public debates that take place in the development of the plot, acquire a political character in the wider sense, even if they seem to handle a rather

personal issue. Hence, even if the disagreement between Creon and Antigone emerges from the burial of Polynices, this should not make us view their agon one-dimensionally, as a case that occurs between the king and the sister of the dead. Their opposition entails a range of political issues, such as loyalty and law obedience, the status of religion or the process of decision making within a polis. And even if Andromache in *Troades* makes a long speech for the loss of her husband, she does not solely speak of her pain, but also of the merciless nature of the war. From this perspective, it can be observed how tragedy discussed publicly, in a dual way which included both the chorus within the performance and the audience outside, the political issues of the time.

As speech maintains a particular position in the political and the theatrical procedures, respective is the significance of action. Lacone-Labarthe approaches the significance of action in tragedy by adopting a linguistic perspective in which she makes an etymological analysis of the word drama. Based on Aristotle who firstly used the verb *dran*, to act, she explains that *drama*, originated from the dorian verb *dran*, is the equivalent of the attic verb *prattein* (2005, p.112). What differentiates it from *prattein* lies in its process-quality (*ibid.*, 111). In the Greek language, the passive nouns that end in *-μα* (-ma) (δρά-μα (dra-ma), ποίη-μα (poih -ma, poem), πράγ-μα (prag-ma, thing) signify the result of an action while the female nouns in *-σις* (- sis) ποίη-σις (poih-sis, poetry), πρά-ξις (pra -xis, action) indicate the process (*ibid.*). In the case of *dran* though, there is no noun to suggest the process, the course of an action. That is because the word includes this dimension in itself. Therefore, as drama includes the process-character of the action of the hero, it presents its heroes as *drontes* (the active participle of the verb *dran*), as creators and participants in the *whole* process of the action (*ibid.*, pp.111- 115).

As a result, delving in the treatise of Athenian tragedy by Aristotle, one will encounter both the concept of *drontes* and of *prattontes* (active participle of the verb

prattein) as the sole characterizations of the leading character, who has only much later been named 'tragic hero', during the following centuries (Giatromanolakis, 2003, p.9). The famous definition of Aristotle itself, determines tragedy as *mimesis of an action*. In the Aristotelian context, the term *mimesis* does not refer to the way in which action is made, but to the re-creational character it has. It can be argued that this concept of re-creation lies in the sense of a new beginning/creation that action provokes through its performance. As a range of theorists argue, this new beginning, this sense of human creation which derives from the human initiative and of which the results are unpredictable and beyond the human control, is, par excellence, discussed in Greek tragedy (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988; Giatromanolakis, 2003). Hero's action constitutes the centre of drama (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988, p.24) as it begins the *peripeteia*, which forms the plot of the play by bringing a new state of affairs in the fictional reality of the play.

Apart from the creative quality of action in tragedy, which is strongly related to the political theories for action, its political character lies in two further characteristics. The first one, briefly mentioned in the previous paragraph, consists in the emergence of action by human initiative, as a result of human will. The second refers to the political dimension that action acquires through the structures and the themes of tragedy. It is worth noting that the plot of tragedies does not focus on private stories but treat political concerns of the citizens in the public space of theatre.

The Greek tragic plays do not present the hero to act either 'accidentally' or unconsciously, but as a someone who has to make a decisive choice, to orient himself in an ideological, ethical and political universe through his action (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988, p.26). This sense of decision and responsibility is made apparent both in the concept of *proairesis* (deliberate action) and in the decision of various tragic heroes

to accept the consequences of their action. From a theoretical perspective, the *proairesis* of the hero, realized in action, gives evidence not only of his responsibility but also of the rational thinking that is involved in this decision (Giatromanolakis, 2003, pp.14-17). From a more text-centred analysis, it can be observed that almost each tragic hero, from Oedipus and Antigone to Medea and Pentheas, stands for his decision without denying his/her responsibility.

Some theorists (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988) though, although they recognize the importance of action in the world of the tragic plays, as well as the element of human responsibility, they also view a hyper-human quality in the way in which the hero acts. In this frame, they recognize a sense of divine will which either indicates him what he will do or is integral in his *proairesis*. This perspective does not acknowledge the human initiative in the action of the hero, without, though, fully denying it as it is bound to take into account the entire political activity of 5th century BC that was based on active participation (Giatromanolakis 2003, p.20, Vernant and Vidal-Naquet, 1988). It can be argued that this approach emphasizes the inclusion of structures and beliefs from the old regime of the archaic era, which are involved in the elaboration of myths during the classical period. This complexity should be related to the fact that the evolution of the Athenian democracy and the changes in beliefs did not take place through an immediate rupture, but through a gradual process. It can be argued that part of this transition is incorporated in the plots of the plays. And therefore, it can be argued that it is exactly this major theme of the autonomy of human action that tragedy aimed among else to discuss, fulfilling its core political role.

Finally, it must be noted that the political character of action is also reinforced by the fact that heroes do not decide only for themselves, do not make a private choice on personal issues. In the majority of the plays, the issues which emerge concern the wider

fictional community, that is presented on stage in the form of the chorus. For example, in *Antigone* (Sophocles, 441 BC) Creon chooses to forbid Polynices' burial and through this proclamation, he chooses his ideological position towards the political issue of betrayal or that of obedience to the laws of the city. In the same line of reasoning, Antigone chooses to bury her beloved brother, and therefore, to act faithfully with the feelings she has for him and with the religious traditions of the polis. Her action, prioritizing her brother and her beliefs, respectively manifests a political-ideological decision. Similar examples, concerning different political issues, in the widest sense, can be encountered in other plays, such as the choice of Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia (*Iphigenia in Aulis*, Euripides), or Orestis' decision to revenge his father murder through the murder of his mother in order to attribute justice (*Oresteia*, Aeschylus, 459 BC) .

2.2.5.3 Tragedy and Evolution of Polis: Re-creation of the Myth

In the historical review in the first part of this chapter, I have presented some key historical moments of Athens and the respective political changes that they signalled in the form of evolution of the institutions. This process that characterised Athenian democracy as progressive and self-re-creative can be said to have characterised tragedies themselves. A range of theorists (Green, 1994, p.16; Easterling, 1997, p.22), studying the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, note that “the myths of classical Greece were highly malleable and the job of the dramatist was not to reproduce myths but to re-create them” (Wiles, 2000, p.5). Re-creation does not only refer to the structural change of the myth but mainly, and more importantly, to the free, deliberate transformation of its profound meanings (Castoriadis, 1993, 2007, 2008; Wiles, 2000; Easterling, 1997). The changes were neither the indiscernible alterations which naturally occur in populations or cultures through the course of the years, nor transformations

provoked by the evolution of language (Castoriadis, 2007, 2008). We encounter myths that constitute part of the tradition of the polis being intentionally transformed in order to respond to, explore and discuss the above-mentioned evolution that preoccupied the Athenian polis. Indeed, the tragic plays were re-created according to the new political, ideological, religious and moral conditions of the polis (Wiles, 2000, p.20). These deliberate transformations which evaluate, approvingly or disapprovingly, the political transformations and, at the same time, reshape tradition (Easterling, 1997, p.22), reveal an exceptional, unprecedented relation with tradition, characteristic of the freedom to reflect and re-create afforded by the democratic regime (Castoriadis, 2007, Wiles, 2000, p.19).

I would like to adduce some characteristic examples that are useful in order to make better sense of the argument analysed above. Firstly, I would like to compare two versions of Oedipus. The *Oidepodeia*, the story of Oedipus that Homer narrated in epic form, presents significant differences in relation to Sophocles' version of *Oedipus Rex*, reflecting major political changes between the archaic and the classical era. In the archaic period when Homer wrote his poems, Athenians were governed by kings, who, while not being grand rulers like the oriental monarchs, still ruled their poleis as chief aristocrats (Rhodes, 2006, p.2). Here, the *hamartia* of Oedipus is centred around the marriage to his mother. The hubris of the hero focuses exclusively on the incest which is, in the Homeric version, the "tragic" theme of the play. The impact of the facts stays between the members of the family, inside the palace. Hence, when Oedipus discovers the incest, he leaves Jocasta and marries a second time to another woman with whom he has his four children (Polynices, Eteocles, Antigone and Ismene) (Wiles, 2000, p.20). More importantly, Oedipus remains the king of the polis, as he makes amends for his hubris which was not directly related to the rest of the life of the polis, at any rate. The

Sophoclean version, on the other hand, bears a much more political dimension and the democratic context is made apparent. In Sophocles' era, the concerns of the Athenians consisted of a range of issues related to human power and, therefore, to human self-limitation and even to the political self-limitation of the governors, namely the Generals. In this context, Oedipus' hubris, although still based on the incest, is presented by Sophocles as more centred around Oedipus' belief in his unlimited power and, hence, lies mostly in man's desire and ambition for control and assertiveness. If we were to also take into account that Sophocles' version was written in the period of Pericles (a charismatic General who, nevertheless, implemented centralised and sometimes arrogant political decisions), the wider, more political ramifications of the play can be easily observed (Tracy, 2009). As a result, in Sophocles' version, the king cannot continue ruling after his hubris, because he is accountable to the citizens of the polis, which suffers the consequences of that hubris. The king cannot continue his kingship, as in Homer's version, because, being responsible for his actions and accountable to the citizens, he is obliged to go into exile.

Another striking case is *Oresteia*. In Aeschylus' final play of the trilogy, *The Furies* (458 BC), the crime of Orestes is judged by the Athenian juridical institution of Areopagus. In this juridical procedure there are some elements that arguably deserve our attention. In the Homeric version, Orestes has the opportunity to apologise only before goddess Athena. In his apology, he explains the reasons for which he committed the crime. Finally, he declares to Athena that he will accept her final ruling regarding his guilt or innocence, any decision that will restore justice. At this point, in the Aeschylean version, Athena convenes Areopagus and provides Athenians with advice regarding the ways in which they should, in the future, treat issues of justice. Athenians vote and, as there is an equality in votes, Athena rules that Orestes should be acquitted. "Aeschylus'

play celebrates that new role which Areopagus performed on behalf of the people” (Wiles, 2000, p.58) and the initial steps of the democratic juridical procedures of the Athenian polis. Euripides’ *Orestes* (408 BC), one of the last tragedies to be performed in democratic Athens, also addresses the issue of Orestes’ guilt or innocence. But, this version of the play, performed 50 years later, gives a different perspective on the treatment of the issues of justice within the polis. In the first place, the juridical institution could be viewed as more democratised in the sense that every citizen, and not only the members of the Areopagus, has the opportunity to support his argument concerning the issue. In the speech of the Messenger (Euripides, verse: 866-957) we can observe that everyone speaks publicly in the juridical court in order to support his opinion. However, it can be argued that strong elements of sophism and frivolity are included in the speeches of orators, elements which are severely criticised by Euripides through the narration of the Messenger. It can also be argued that in this re-creation of the myth, one can observe a certain kind of development of democratic procedures of justice, such as the reforms in the function of *Heliaia* made by Ephialtes and Pericles. On the other hand, one can clearly observe the criticism that the tragedy addresses to the political ‘progression’ of Athens.

The Athens of Aeschylus is the city that defeated the Persians; the Argos of Euripides’ *Orestes* evokes an Athens that was losing its empire [...]. Whilst Aeschylus’ play enacts the democratic processes of speaking and casting ballots, Euripides has a messenger describe the assembly, which seems part of an alien world over which individuals have little control – though Orestes does secure one small concession. Euripides’ chorus become sympathetic onlookers with no active involvement in the plot. The audience’s mode of viewing thus changes. In Euripides’ play only private life is visible to the spectator. There

is no sense of interaction between the individual and the collective (Wiles, 2000, p.59).

In this context, we can observe not only the ways in which tradition is re-created in order to be meaningful for the Athenians of the fifth century, but also an additional function of Athenian tragedy, namely that of reflection and criticism.

2.2.5.4 Tragedy as an Institution of Collective Self-limitation

As tragic plays explored contemporary issues through the distant shape of myth, ethics, issues of justice, political procedures and decisions of the city (Easterling, 1997; Green, 1994; Meier, 1993; Vidal-Naquet & Vernant, 1988) were presented before Athenians. It is in this context that, as has already been mentioned, according to Castoriadis, the performance of tragedy in the festival of Great Dionysia has been the most essential institution of collective self-limitation. The hubris of the Generals with catastrophic outcome for the polis or the collective hubris in the form of the Assembly's decisions that led to disgracing wars were presented in the public space of theatre and gave the opportunity to the entirety of the citizens to reflect on their own politics and on the ways these issues were treated in the context of their polis. The *Persians*, which presents the catastrophic outcome of war in a foreign city, or *The Trojan Women* (performed after the pestilent campaign of Athenians to Milos), which enacts the murder of the male population of Troy and the burning of the city by the Greeks, constitute representative examples of plays that seem to encourage Athenians to reflect on the catastrophic outcomes of their imperialistic policies for themselves or for other populations.

What lies in the heart of such self-reflection is the way in which decisions are made, namely the core structures of democracy itself. A key idea of the Athenian mental infrastructure is that of *phronesis*. Phronesis is “the virtue of practical intelligence, of

knowing how to apply general principles in particular situations. It is not the ability to formulate principles intellectually or to deduce what ought to be done. It is the ability to act so that principle will take a concrete form (MacIntyre, 1967, p.74). One of the principles that characterised the identity of the citizen was equality in phronesis, what the Athenians defined as *isos phronein* ('isos' means 'equal'). Equal phronesis means that all citizens had the right to phronesis and that each one of them should consider the other's phronesis as equally informed and important as his own and should take it seriously into account during a dialogue in the agora or in the process of decision-making in the Assembly and the Council.

As *isos phronein* was considered an outstanding democratic principle, the *monos phronein* ('monos' means 'alone') constituted a quality of those who were *apolis* (not belonging to a city, "unpolitical" Meier, 1993, p.370). In the Athenian regime, men are the polis (*andres gar polis*) and, therefore, the source of its institution. The *apolis* is a characterisation to indicate the irresponsible citizen, the one who acts without concern for the polis, the one who does not participate, does not act, or acts against the interests of his polis. In this political context, the citizen who *monos phronein* without considering the opinion of the others can be characterised as *apolis*, because, by neglecting the other citizens' opinion, he does not responsibly participate and does not act beneficially for the polis.

Tragedy discusses the hubris of *monos phronein* and its catastrophic results for democracy, and reveals the importance of *isos phronein*. The tragic play that thematises the issue par excellence is Sophocles' *Antigone*. As is well known, Antigone decides to bury her brother Polynices despite Creon's announcement which prohibits his burial because he betrayed Thebes, his polis, by joining the forces of Argos and fighting against Thebes. Antigone adduces the divine law and her love for her brother in support

of her decision. Creon, on the other hand, stresses the importance of political law as the reason for his insistence to condemn Antigone to death for her action of burying her brother. Although, in the first place, he seems to have taken the right decision for the polis, his persistence in his initial stance and his choice to *monos phronein* without taking into account the other's position constitutes hubris against democracy and the principle of *isos phronein*. In this way, as Castoriadis notes, tragedy "shows that hubris has nothing to do with the transgression of definite norms, that it can take the form of the adamant will to apply the norms" (1983, p.286). By its denunciation of *monos phronein*, it reveals equal *phronesis* as the principal self-limitation of democracy and, therefore, it formulates the fundamental maxim of democratic politics (Castoriadis, 1983).

In conclusion, one could not avoid noticing the affinities with Habermas' theory of communicative action that was discussed in the previous chapter. In the frame of his own theory, Habermas uses the notion of communicative rationality in order to describe the way of reasoning that citizens should employ when arguing within a democratic context. This rationality, as his term implies, cannot be the product of a sole or private way of thinking but derives from the composition of two or more perspectives or from the transformation of one's point of view, even slightly, by accepting that of the other's.

2.2.5.5 A Conclusion for tragedy: Performing politics and the public sphere

From what has been presented above, it becomes apparent that tragic theatre has been itself an institution indissolubly related to democracy. Even the space in which tragic plays are developed, on and off stage, is political. The heroes of the plays are archons of a polis and both their contests of speech (*agons*) and their actions that create the course of things have an impact on the polis. Speeches and actions are always

presented before the eyes of a chorus representing polis, and never occur in the interior of the palace – unless they involve murder or death. A smaller public sphere is thus formed by the heroes and the chorus within the wider public sphere of the theatre formed by the audience/citizens. As a result, a miniature of political life is re-created before the eyes of the audience.

The common structure of the political function of the polis and of tragic theatre gives the latter an idiosyncratic performative character which is, according to Castoriadis, one the most essential features of its political role. Castoriadis underlines the importance of the enactment of the story from the perspective of speech and action as political functions within the tragic context (Castoriadis, 2008). He argues that the same issues would not be so powerfully reflected if they were narrated by a poet, discussed between a group of citizens in the agora or even in the larger scale of the Council and the Assembly. The essence of tragedy lies in the fact that politics is performed ‘live’ in front of the citizens (*ibid*, p.208), that it occurs in the same way and by the same means (speech and action) of democratic politics that Athenians experience in their ordinary life. This analogy might be what Aristotle named “*mimesis*” with its re-creational dimension, as analysed above. Tragedy does not imitate political life but re-creates it, in another context. It is the performative character of this re-creation of the public world that enables Arendt to argue that ancient drama, being the political art par excellence, is the mimesis of an action in a real context and from real actors, and not just a simple representation (Arendt, 1958, pp.187-188). The originally political issues treated by the plays through performed speech and action in front of the citizens (chorus and audience) do not only represent a reality but re-create a new one, sometimes capable of suggesting other realities in the Athenian polis. In this sense, it is not only the socio-political context that influences the theatrical genre but also the art form that ‘re-

supplies' or interrogates the wider political structures and issues. In this line of reasoning, it can be argued that theatre, as an institution conceived and formed within the context of Athenian democracy, is not just political art but the only art which fosters the public sphere. Concluding this syllogism, one can argue that tragedy became a miniature of the political life of the polis by being an instituted public sphere within which issues were presented to citizens so they could reflect on them. This might be the reason for which Goldhill (2006, p.54) argues that, in the Athenian context, being part of the audience was an essential political act, in the sense that it constituted a kind of participation in politics.

2.3 Ensemble Theatre

It is argued that the concept of ensemble theatre derives from the context of professional theatre, and refers to the collective initiative that a group of theatre artists undertake in order to co-create for a period of time. More specifically,

[e]nsemble theatre occurs when a group of theatre artists (performers, artistic directors, stage management and the key administrative staff) work together over many years to create theatre. Other artists (such as writers, performers, directors, designers, composers, choreographers, etc) will be brought in on an occasional basis to refresh and develop the work of the ensemble – although the focus will remain on its permanent personnel. (Ensemble Theatre Conference [ETC], 2004, p.3)

In this context, different kinds of ensemble theatres have contributed to the development of the idea of ensemble theatre. Joan Littlewood explicitly argued about the egalitarian process that should characterise theatre-making and claimed that “I do not believe in the supremacy of the director, designer, actor or even of the writer” (cited in ETC, 2004, p.4). In a different context, the influential work of Eimuntas Nekrosius in Vilnius,

Lithuania provided great stimuli on the artistic potential of the collective creation (Boyd cited in ETC, 2004). The more physical-based approach of Theatre de Complicite ‘travelled’ internationally to provide audiences around the world not only with experiences of ensemble theatre, but also with educational tools for collaborative forms of theatre making (complicite.org, Teachers notes - devise). The collective works of these theatrical ensembles provide us with valuable artistic achievements that can be convincing examples to reassert our faith on the “whole being greater than the sum of its parts” (Boyd cited in ETC, 2004, p.14).

This collaborative character of ensemble theatre, in which the egalitarian and the inclusive procedures aim to ‘utilize’ all the different specialties of theatre – as parts of the greater sum – must not be perceived as some kind of ideal, ‘ready-made’ collective. As Tadeusz Bradecki of Stary Teatr, Krakow makes clear, in this “self-controlling organization”,

[w]e have always been an association of artists who have sometimes quarrelled, competed with one another, and sometimes gone hand in hand. [...] [A] permanent company of high-class professionals: actors, directors, stage-designers, technicians, etc; a company representing an aesthetic and ideological variety, but united by the same concern for the art of the theatre. (cited in ETC, 2004, p.6)

Robert Stephens, a founder member of the National Theatre of Great Britain, describes Olivier’s Ensemble in a similar way:

What was interesting about that – the National as it began – was that they brought in this extraordinary Knorr soup of all the different ingredients: all different sorts of actors with different personalities [...] So everybody felt important. (*ibid.*, p.7)

And Trevor Nunn, looking back at his ideal image of collaboration within ensembles when he first read about Moscow Art and the Berliner Ensemble, leaves no doubt:

I now know that things were never quite like that in those trail-blazing ensembles. [...] I learned during my eighteen years at the RSC that compromise is a daily necessity in the life of a permanent ensemble, and that not everybody is prepared to make the personal sacrifices necessary for the system to work as it should. (*ibid.*, p.8)

It is thus this process-quality of ensemble theatre that renders its collectiveness an extremely dynamic character. It is a collective identity achieved through a process, rather than an idea of collective that is addressed and imposed on to its members. This process entails stages that render cooperation “an earned experience rather than just thoughtless sharing” (Sennett, 2012, p.13). And it is exactly this dynamic, ‘argumentative’ quality of ensemble that allows it to re-create itself through time, and produce new artistic material out of the old.

We want to have arguments in the theatre. We want to have a lot of various thinkings. We want to have the place when people meet and discuss and argue. And we have sometimes very hard discussion. Sometimes some people go out from the room when we are thinking about some project. But I believe that – from this kind of very hard atmosphere, very hard discussions – can come something really fresh which is the mixture of tradition (of that which we have from our big theatre directors, big older actors) and of something that can bring on the young artists (Agata Siwiak, Stary Teatr, Kraków, Poland, cited in ETC, 2004, p.29).

In more political terms, what ensemble theatre “subverts” in theatre “is hierarchy, cultural domination of various kinds, and inability to challenge or debate ideas and bring up new ideas.” (*ibid.*, p.51)

It is argued that it is exactly through this process that each member of the ensemble finds their role and explores the possibilities of becoming a “cooperative creature” (Sennett, 2012, p.14). Above all, this means that the members of the ensemble do not have to be stars or leading actors. Their exceptionality is developed through their commitment and participation. As Boyd describes, one of the initial difficulties he encountered in his endeavour to reconstitute the RSC Ensemble lay in “persuading leading actors that there is a virtue in not always playing leading roles” (cited in ETC, 2004, p.14).

Ruth Makenzie (Artistic Director of Chichester Festival Theatre, 2004, p.48) posits the same idea on a more general scale. “The ensemble’s the star. We’re not about stars. Everyone’s the star”. That is the reason why, after all, ensemble theatre is not labelled as just collaborative, but most often egalitarian and deeply democratic. Boyd asks himself;

Is it impossible to reconcile our egos in consensus or can an ensemble company act in some sense as a maquette version of the real world; a better version of the real world on an achievable scale which celebrates the virtues of collaboration. (*ibid.*, p.17)

This is a deeply political question. It is not accidental that for many of the supporters of the ensemble theatre, this endeavour tends to signify a networking, an outreach, a ‘working together’. It is like a democratisation of theatre (Stuart Bennett, ASSITEJ, Small Scale Theatre Committee, Equity, *ibid.*, p.54). In producing art, these questions may often seem secondary, or a means to an end, but in young people’s education, this political problem may become an end in itself.

In the domain of educational theatre, the ensemble practices that are structured on the basis of the *greatness* of the *whole* are associated with democratic models of

learning and creating. In turn, the democratic identity of these collective practices is interwoven with a wider educational agenda for young people's education in active citizenship.

According to Neelands,

the experience of the ensemble might provide participants with a second order identity as citizens struggling together, on a civic stage, to create continuously challenge and modify ideas of the "common good". (2007, pp.315)

The reasoning of this syllogism lies in the aspiration that

through the formal and public process of becoming a collective or artistic actors there is the possibility of discovering the process of becoming social actors freely engaging in civic dialogic democracy. (*ibid.*)

In this context, the educational aims of ensemble theatre-making surpass the boundaries of learning *within* an artistic subject and render ensemble theatre-making a democratic experience for learning, "a model of 'being with'"(Neelands, 2009, p.175). In other words, ensemble building is viewed as a practice within drama education that can function as a "powerful metaphor for democratic living" (Enciso *et al.* 2011, p.215). Apart from the overall potential of the ensemble to integrate democratic practices and to provide students with respectively democratic experiences, Neelands argues for an additional democratic analogy that, in this case, concerns the possibility of ensemble theatre's practices to integrate the democratic ideals of the Athenians polis, analysed above (2009). These ideals become the founding principles and practices of the ensemble cooperation, and increase the potential of ensemble theatre making to provide students with real life opportunities to develop their collective self-instituting abilities.

In this argument, the following constitute the necessary principles that structure the *modus vivendi* and the *modus operandi* of an artistic ensemble in order to enable its members to uncrown the power of the teacher and distribute it among themselves:

Isonomia: equality in respect of law

Isegoria: the right to speak

Isopsephia: equal representation

Parrhesia: moral obligation to speak your mind

Autonomia: right to self-determination (Neelands, 2009, p.183)

This is a *process of becoming*, an experienced exploration of the ways in which a group is rendered an autonomous and self-instituting collective of social and artistic actors.

Specifically,

Working together in the social and egalitarian conditions of ensemble based drama, young people have the opportunity to struggle with the demands of becoming a self-managing, self-governing, self-regulating social group who co-create artistically and socially and begin to model these ideals of the Athenian polis (autonomous, autodikous, autoteles) (*ibid.*, p.182).

Before examining further the argument's sub-structures, it is essential to note that what Boyd names "achievable scale" constitutes a pre-condition of paramount importance for the claims for a democratising form of drama education (Boyd, 2004, p.17). Whereas the whole enterprise is particularly ambitious, its realistic dimension lies in the fact that it begins from the environment of the classroom which can be considered as an "achievable scale" (*ibid.*). Ensemble practices and skills might realistically be seeded in the temporary culture of an ensemble based drama class.

The claim for the importance of the experience of ensemble in drama education is based on the idea of ‘achievable scale’; that at the level of the classroom and the teachers and young people who use it, it ought to be possible to offer some working and active idea, at least, of what democratic civic life might look like. (Neelands, 2009, p.185)

This means that part of the realistic basis of this educational aspiration lies in its realisation ‘at the level of classroom’ where a small, instead of a large, group of young people needs to find the common ground for this social and theatrical cooperation.

In the previous section, the continual process or re-creation of the Athenian polis was analysed in order to emphasise the structural principles and practices of a society’s course towards self-institution and continuous self-creation. In this context, the equal and direct participation of citizens – through dialogue and action – proved to be the most structural element for the development of Athenians’ consciousness as creators of their realities, as institutors of their society and as equal individuals with the common identity of citizen. The significance of dialogue and action was also revealed through the association of these practices with the direct participation in political self-institution. The role of theatre as a political institution of self-reflection was also analysed.

In this context, what is at stake in the democratic process lies in the gradual establishment of a frame of practices, structures and institutions that sought to allow or even activate the participation of citizens in this same democratic process of word and action, which, in turn, would lead to a self-reflective collective. In the same way, the introduction of ensemble theatre practices to the drama classroom seeks to establish an initial frame that aspires to allow the traces of basic practices of Athenian citizenship to enter into the educational processes. It is argued that the principles of *isonomia* and *isegoria*, as well as the distribution of power to the ensemble participants that Neelands

suggests, brings the basis of *equal and direct participation* to the members of the theatre ensemble. In this context, young people become the communicative actors entitled to open dialogues and to interact in order to explore and develop their ability to re-create their classroom and learning reality, to view themselves as world creators, and to realise that this pursuit must be carried out in fellowship and solidarity (Freire, 2003, pp.60, 65, 67).

In this practical – instead of abstract – and experienced – instead of ‘delivered’ – learning cooperation becomes a self-creating and self-created process (Sennett, 2012; Neelands, 2009; Tully, 2008). As Athenians learnt to become and ‘re-become’ active citizens in the process of social creation and re-creation, ensemble participants become equal members in the enterprise of world creation through the continuous process of communicating, rehearsing, performing, responding, reflecting, correcting and instituting the terms and the means of their social cooperation and their artistic world creation. Developing these communicative and autonomy-oriented practices in ensemble drama, “students are actively engaged in their own learning” and encouraged to develop “an active culture of participation” (Nicholson, 2000, p.9).

Argumentative and dialogic negotiations, differences and empathetic resolutions are part of this demanding cooperation (Sennett, 2012). They are also part of the “broadening the scope of political socialization” (Frazer and Elmer, 1997, p.189). Struggling, negotiating, participating in dialogue and agreeing on ways to proceed, are all part of what art-making necessitates, and part of what transformation and re-creation of norms demands (Sennett, 2012; Freire, 2003, p.67). Students, through “playing a part” (Hughes and Wilson, 2004, p.57) in the practices of ensemble theatre have the opportunity to re-create their group practices and to become members of a collective. In doing so they may reflect on or modify their own identities as active members of a social

enterprise (Tully, 2008, p.153). This ensemble “skill-development becomes a ritual, if practiced again and again” and can be a continuous apprenticeship of *citizenization* (Sennett, 2012, p.202; Tully, 2000, p.480).

In this context, ensemble-based theatre learning might contribute to the democratic reform and become an ‘applicable’ experience from the workshop to society (Sennett, 2012, p.200).

2.3.1 Integrated and Inclusive Learning: Contextualising Ensemble Theatre in the Educational Landscape

In a sociological approach to educational knowledge, Basil Bernstein classifies educational knowledge according to the “underlying principles which shape curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation” in two “educational knowledge codes” – the collection and the integrated code (Bernstein, 1973, p.203, 202).

“Strong insulation between contents pointed to the collection type, whereas reduced insulation pointed to an integrated type” (*ibid.*, p.205).

The criteria for this categorisation concern both the *classification* – namely, the degree of relationship or of boundaries among curricular subjects – and the *frame*, namely, the “structure of the message system, pedagogy” (*ibid.*). This means that when the classification is strong, boundaries between the educational subjects are strictly imposed and observed. When the classification is weak the boundaries between contents are blurred, and hence, the possibility of bridging and integrating the educational subjects is increased. However, the classification is not the unique criterion of this categorisation. The degree of structure of pedagogy is also significant. Frame, refers to

the degree of control teacher and pupils possess over the selection, organization and pacing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogic relationship (*ibid.*, p.206).

The strong frame, where the teacher and the students have very limited control over the educational process, is associated with the collection code, whereas weak framing is connected to the integrated code. At this point it is important to note “that the strength of classification and the strength of frames can vary independently of each other” (*ibid.*). Along the same line of reasoning, Bernstein proceeds to a further categorisation of frames, and argues that

we can consider variations in the strength of frames as these refer to the strength of the boundary between educational knowledge and everyday non-school knowledge of teacher and taught. (*ibid.*)

In this case, the teacher has very few available options to connect what is taught with the everyday knowledge of the students, because *curricula* and syllabi are very explicit.

The significance of this categorisation of educational knowledge has several sociological implications. In the case of strong classification of subjects there is a high tendency for specialisation and the “difference from rather than communality” that it entails (*ibid.*, p.212). Therefore, in the collection code students are socialised early with didactic models of learning and with the idea of knowledge as private property, whereas in the integrated code, where knowledge is differently evaluated and legitimated according to broader criteria, the theory of learning is more group- and self-regulative (*ibid.*, p.213).

In this context, a structural relationship between the idea of the ensemble and Bernstein’s theory of integrated code can be observed. Considering the overall socio-political aspirations that characterise the *raison d’être* of the ensemble, as well as the

inclusion of theatrical genres and methods that characterise its practices, it is argued that ensemble theatre-making aims for an integrated educational knowledge code, par excellence.

The idea of the ensemble has the potential of reconciling the tensions between the social and the artistic. It opens dialogue around a common theme between subject-based paradigms of drama and those that are more concerned with responding to the personal and social needs for young people. It also unifies drama educational models with the world of professional ensemble theatre. (Neelands, 2009, p.182)

These interactions between the artistic and the socio-political, the subject-based paradigms of drama and the process-based approaches, as well as the integration of educational and professional practices of theatre-learning, are at the core of the ensemble theatre based approach to teaching drama and theatre, because it enables the students to construct multi-perspectival and meaningful knowledge that addresses the different contexts of their lives.

2.3.2 Structuring the Ensemble-based Learning: The Conventions Approach

Peter Brook views an actor's participation in a permanent artistic company as an essential condition for talent to flourish, while, at the same time, emphasising the necessity of a "school" for the artistic growth and autonomy of this group of actors (Brook, 1990, pp.32-34).

[E]ven a permanent company is doomed to deadliness in the long run if it is without an aim, and thus without a method, and thus without a school. (*ibid.*, p.34)

It is argued that the interdependence he ascribes to the notions of aim and of the method makes apparent their collaborative function in the structure of what could be called the

company's *vision* for theatre. From this perspective, a company's vision, its artistic and political aspirations – or aims, in Brook's terms – are interrelated to its school of artistic thought and to the method of its theatrical practice. In the analogous course of the professional ensemble, the learning ensemble requires a respective *apprenticeship model* on which it will base its artistic vision and its socio-theatrical autonomy (Neelands, 2008). In this context, a comprehensive *apprenticeship model* is chosen to structure the ensemble drama work on a conception of theatre that balances its aims between the existing cultural knowledge of students, and a more subject-specific learning (Neelands, 2004). The reason for aiming to achieve subject-specific knowledge derives from the aspiration of providing students with a powerful system of expression, communication and world creation that can function as a tool for their imagination, rather than as an impediment (Winston, 2010, p.97).

In this framework, the conventions approach – constructed by Neelands and Goode in *Structuring Drama Work* (2000)– frames the dramatic activity of the specific project, since it can fully respond to the inclusive and multi-perspective nature of theatrical learning and of the broader political and citizenship education that an integrated curriculum advocates. In this approach, drama is viewed as

the direct experience that is shared when people imagine and behave as if they were other than themselves in some other place at another time. This definition seeks to encompass all forms of creative imitative behaviour – from the loose and spontaneous imaginative play of young people [...] through to the more formal experience of the play performed by actors for an audience. (2000, p.4)

Based on this inclusive and participatory definition of theatre, the suggested conventions assume that “theatre does not describe a single form of activity, e.g. the performance of

a playwright's work to an audience" and therefore include a wide range of theatrical repertoire that constitute a "bridge between spontaneous and innate uses of theatre and the more poetic conventions of performance craft" (*ibid.*, pp.3, 5).

This dramatic framework lies at the core of the ensemble philosophy of theatre-making, because it provides the students with a wide range of *given circumstances* to develop different levels of theatre ability and hence to utilise different strengths during their participation in the common process. A range of conventions is provided to enable students to be actively engaged with the theme of a story (context-building action), to explore the narrative dimensions of theatre (narrative action), to perform symbolically complex and sub-textual meanings (poetic action) and to reflect on the actions and meanings that the symbolic reality entails (reflective action). This non-hierarchical structure for working in drama (*ibid.*, p.6) legitimates a range of skills and abilities through which students can participate in the process of drama. The writer, director, painter, actor, spectator and other roles emerge through various conventions in order for students to be initiated to the process through a secure contribution based on their different strengths, while, during the evolution of the process, they are given the opportunity to view and experience other modes of contribution and participation. Similarly, the conventions of group work allow students not only to choose how they wish to participate, but also the extent to which they participate.

Removing drama from the exclusive norms of performance, and including various forms of participation, a range of conventions such as still-image, shape-shifting, choral speak or group sculpture recognise the right of students not only to act at the forefront of the activity but also in its periphery. Gallagher refers to Anderson's 'peripheral participation', in which a student participates in drama as a spectator or in a different position from the actor. This notion attempts to legitimate students' right to

participate in drama from different positions. It can be argued that the conventions approach reinforces this quality of drama, because different conventions utilise different roles in drama participation and invite students to participate in different levels of drama (2007, p.159).

The second reason for choosing the conventions approach to structure the ensemble drama lessons lies in the integrated dimensions that conventions bring to the drama classroom, because they provide an opportunity for students both to use and extend their cultural resources as well as to make deeper meanings both of the theatre reality and the wider world. In the first place, the comprehensive quality of the conventions approach moves the theatrical experience beyond a mere consideration of dramatic skills, and transforms it into a wider cultural resource. In this context, students are able to identify familiar entry points to take part in the process and new stimuli in order to extend their cultural repertoires (Neelands and Goode, 2000, pp.3-5).

The conventions approach can be also viewed as an enhanced educational experience that systematically stimulates students to develop understanding about both human experience, and the ways in which it is constructed and represented (*ibid.*). In this approach, students are not asked to replicate real life, but are encouraged to explore and experience real life in ways which cannot happen in real life. Moments are focused, actions are paused, inner thoughts are enacted and sub-textual meanings are publicly performed. Therefore, there are more possibilities for students to acquire greater consciousness of the meanings that are treated in the play and the ways in which these meanings can be communicated more efficiently or re-created according to participants' imaginations (Fleming, 2001, p.16). Conventions such as the 'alter-ego', 'analogy' or 'behind the scenes' enable participants to achieve different levels or perspectives on the same meanings, and to create connections between the concrete action of drama and

wider personal and socio-political actions of the world outside the classroom (Neelands and Goode, 2000, p.45, 48, 49).

Finally,

the emphasis in the conventions approach [...] on giving students the means to take their own dramatic representations by introducing them to increasingly wide and complex choices of 'means' for depicting the world (Neelands, 2010, p.103)

constitutes the final reason for basing the ensemble process on the specific drama conventions approach. As discussed above, ensemble theatre-making is a process that aims to foster the self-instituting ability of students as a social and artistic group. As is also analysed above (See section 2.1.3), the process of self-institution is a precondition for subverting the omnipotence of external authority, and instead fosters students' autonomy. However, for this autonomy to be achieved or approached, students must gradually become able to use the means of theatre in a more autonomous or self-sufficient way. In this context, a range of conventions is gradually and systematically introduced according to their complexity and to emphasise different qualities in the theatrical possibilities. This constitutes a comprehensive and systematic way for students to develop their educational and artistic autonomy. The scaffolding character of theatre learning has the potential to enable students to build upon subjective responses to theatre experience with a more conscious application of form to meaning (Neelands and Goode, 2000, p.3). From this perspective, conventions can be viewed as a clear, comprehensive and systematic vocabulary, the learning of which will enable students to develop their theatrical literacy and therefore their greater artistic autonomy.

2.3.3 Providing Ensemble-based Learning with Myth: The Choice of *Antigone*

Sophocles' play *Antigone* (442 BC) is the Athenian tragedy that constitutes the narrative means in order for students to explore politics together "as material and embodied practices" in their "thickness and complexity" (Wiles, 2011, p.23; Winston, 1998, p.8). It can be argued that *Antigone* is one of the most frequently studied Greek tragedies, both as a theatrical play of classical repertoire and as a paradigmatic political play. The frequency of multiple approaches is noted in the study of *Antigones* (1984) in which the theorist George Steiner reviews and analyses the myth of Antigone in western literature, art and thought. However, he makes clear that

no complete catalogue of the explicit and implicit lives of the Antigone theme, from its mythical, 'pre-epic' origins to the present, has been or can be drawn up. The field is too vast.

But even on strictly literary grounds, an inclusive survey would have to go far outside the texts I have cited. (*ibid.*, p.194)

The broadness of these approaches does not only concern their quantity but also their content. Steiner paradigmatically demonstrates the multiplicity of the 'readings' and the meanings that were ascribed to the themes of the play or have been re-addressed by the major philosophical systems after the French Revolution, or by other personae of arts and theatre (1984). From Schelling, Schlegel, Hegel and Heidegger, to Brecht, Anouilh and Fugard, the 'readings' or the 're-telling' of the myth provided evidence of the interpretive openness of the play and its themes' connections with human reality through the dramatisation of "the meshing of intimate and public, of private and historical existence" (*ibid.*, p.10).

Nevertheless, despite the vagueness of these approaches, wider hermeneutic categories constitute dominant frameworks within which individual academic, literary and performative interpretations can be classified. Oudemans and Lardinois argue that the

two major interpretive trends with respect to *Antigone*, the orthodox view and the Hegelian view, correspond to direct separateness and indirect separateness (viz, harmonization), the two major European cosmological strategies in dealing with contradictions and ambiguity. (1987, p.107)

In terms of the separative interpretive tradition, an explicit division is made between the absolute senses of justice and injustice that are respectively represented by the two main heroes of the play, *Antigone* and *Creon* (*ibid.*, p. 107). From this perspective, *Antigone's* divine endeavour and fairness is clearly distinguished from *Creon's* human hubristic nature. Therefore, the latter remains excluded from the heroic identity and the tragic realm, while *Antigone* is rendered the holy heroine of divine order (*ibid.*, p.108). Owing to the fact that the overwhelming majority of *Antigone's* interpretations are based on this syllogistic framework, Oudemans and Lardinois define this hermeneutic tradition as the orthodox one (*ibid.*, p.107).

The orthodox interpretive tradition constitutes the dominant approach of the play in the National Curriculum¹⁶ as well as in the wider social discourses in Greek society. The reasons for this 'interpretive establishment' vary and are complicated. Nevertheless, a principal explanation might be hidden in the inter-complementary relationship of Orthodoxy and of Greek history in the formation of the Greek nation state and of the population's national consciousness (Repousi, 2011, pp.1-3). From this perspective, the

¹⁶ This issue will be considered in detail in the analysis of the data of the second school where the project is incorporated in the module of *Ancient Greek Poetry and Grammarology: Sophocles' Antigone* and where the play is taught according to the instruction of the National Syllabi.

overall association of “Greekness” with Orthodox Christianity and ancient Greece originates from the period of the emancipation of the Greek Orthodox populations from the Ottoman Empire, and is still apparent in our National Curriculum. In the period of the emancipation of Greek populations from the Ottoman Empire, Orthodoxy and its relation to the achievements of Greece in antiquity constituted the main tools for the Greek struggle for liberation. Nevertheless, the perpetuation of these ideals in contemporary education is viewed as problematic by a number of contemporary thinkers (Liakos, 2001 p.30).

In contrast to the separative tradition, in the context of the Hegelian conception and its successors, the greatness of the text does not depend on the thesis that each hero advocates but lies in the final synthesis of the meanings of the play. It is the *overall* dramatisation of *Antigone* that Hegel concentrates on, and on the ways in which “the existential dualities of man and society, of the living and the dead, of the immanent and the transcendent” (Steiner, 1984, p.32) are performed by both heroes. Therefore, the positions of both Antigone and Creon are of equal strength and justice. The one-sidedness of both is what renders them ‘illegitimate’ and what isolates the heroes in the undemocratic realm of *monos phronein*. In this interpretive infrastructure, Hegel analyses that

[e]ach of these two sides actualizes (verwirklicht) only one of the ethical powers, and has only one as its content. This is their one-sidedness. The meaning of eternal justice is made manifest thus: both attain injustice just because they are one-sided, but both also attain justice. Both are recognized as valid in the ‘unclouded’ course and process of morality (im ungetrubten Gang der Sittlichkeit). Here both possess their validity, but an equalized validity. Justice only comes forwards to oppose one-sidedness. (Hegel cited in Steiner, 1984, p.37)

In this interpretive approach, neither sense of justice can claim to be more essential than the other, while both heroes should have acknowledged that their claims to knowledge incorporated a certain kind of manifestation of hubris (Oudemans and Lardinois, 1987). It is essential to notice that both the separative and the Hegelian schools of interpretation constitute two very wide hermeneutic traditions and, hence, each of them incorporates an equally broad range of approaches. The overwhelming majority of these approaches do not exactly replicate the principles of the separative or the Hegelian traditions. By contrast, there are variations and/or nuances in their details that characterise the uniqueness of each interpretation. In some cases, there are interpretations that locate Antigone's superiority in her revolutionary nature and not necessarily in her religious faith. In other cases, the hermeneutic approaches to the play are influenced by both traditions. Although they recognise the hubris in both heroes' claims and actions, they still consider Antigone morally superior.

Specifically, the traditions of separative and Hegelian approaches are presented as mutually exclusive by Oudemans and Lardinois. However, whereas a range of 'readings' of the play recognise the one-sidedness of both heroes, they distinguish Antigone either for her belief in a higher order of justice – divine, moral or otherwise – or for her revolutionary spirit (Nussbaum, 2001; Meier, 1993, p.201).

Meier, analysing the political nature of Greek tragedy, acknowledges that *Antigone* is often "seen as a drama of revolt against the power of the state" (1993, p.194). In this context, the heroine is viewed as a revolutionary subject who dares to resist the arbitrary decisions of the establishment. She represents, "in a certain degree, this kind of citizen who makes things to progress" and who "brings contemporary politics into question" (*ibid.*, p.201). Her reactionary action is viewed as an autonomous response to the one-dimensional rationality of Creon's decision, which ends up being an

arbitrary or intransigent law (1993). In this interpretive framework, in which Antigone is viewed as a decisive individual, Creon is criticised as an authoritative governor who “misuses his decree by calling it ‘the law’” (*ibid.*, p.198) and who fails to realise that “there can be more than one point of view and that only after discussion can good decisions be made” (*ibid.*, p.200). Therefore, in this respect, the caution of emptiness – in which a man is condemned if he only believes as correct his own opinion (Haemon, verse: 720) – is only addressed to Creon.

In a similar – but not identical – perspective, Antigone is again interpreted as “morally superior to Creon” but the caution of the catastrophic results of *monos phronein* in a democratic polis concerns both of them (Nussbaum, 2001, p.63). According to Nussbaum’s approach, the superiority of Antigone does not lie in her revolutionary nature, but in her transcendent morality. In this respect, the heroine “is expressing not a general attachment to love, but a devotion to the *philia* of the family” (*ibid.*, p.64). Therefore, her position demonstrates an equal commitment to a virtue or a duty as Creon’s devotion to civic good. But, her exceptionality – apart from its moral superiority – also lies in her brave self-sacrifice:

Antigone remains ready to risk and to sacrifice her ends in a way that is not possible for Creon, given the singleness of his conception of value. There is a complexity in Antigone’s virtue that permits genuine sacrifice within the defense of piety. (*ibid.* p.66-67)

However, although Nussbaum accepts the correctness of Antigone’s decision, she also recognises and values the significance that the whole play ascribes to *phronesis*. In the context of this interpretation the correctness of Antigone’s standpoint remains indisputable but Nussbaum notes that its one-sidedness renders it. The correctness of Antigone’s thesis, though it remains indisputable, by neglecting the other point of view,

is denied a part of its validity because it is not correct for the “right reasons, and almost, as it were by accident” (*ibid.*, p.436). Hence, the emphasis is placed on the impasse of *monos phronein* in the conduct of human life:

Creon saw that the city itself is pious and loving; that he could not be its champion without valuing what it values, in all its complexity. Antigone comes to see that the service of the dead requires the city, that her own religious aims cannot be fulfilled without civic institutions. (*ibid.*, p.66)

Therefore, the essentiality of equal dialogue and communication – in other words, the value of *phronesis* – is rendered as the ultimate meaning of this tragedy. Sophocles’ play

ends up with the assertion that practical wisdom (to *phronein*) is the most important constituent of human good living (*eudaimonia*, verse: 1348-9). It is also a play about teaching and learning, about changing one’s vision of the world, about losing one’s grip on what looked like secure truth and learning a more elusive kind of wisdom. (*ibid.*, p.52)

It is worth noting that in this abstract from Nussbaum’s analysis, as well as in her entire approach, the significance of *phronesis* is contextualised in a discourse for *eudaimonia* (good living),¹⁷ virtue, and morality. The essentiality of *phronesis*, of practical wisdom, is viewed in relation to the complex and ambiguous practicality of human life which is conducted in the search for *eudaimonia*. Hence, Nussbaum analyses *Antigone* as a significant play that encourages reflection and ‘teaches’ *phronesis* in our approaches to the world.

From a similar – but not identical – perspective, Castoriadis also views *Antigone*’s ultimate meaning in *phronesis*. However, having his theoretical origins in

¹⁷ The term *eudaimonia*, although translated as ‘good living’, in its original meaning in the ancient Greek context incorporates the notions of *arête* (virtue) and morality/human values.

political philosophy, he politicises both the meaning of the play and the concept of phronesis by empathising with the idea of *isos phronein*, of phronein as equally eligible. Castoriadis argues that *Antigone* – like *Pericles' Funeral Oration* – is a culmination of the democratic polis, because it excludes the practice of monos phronein and responds to the possibility of human hubris through phronesis (2008, p.28). In this context, *Antigone* is a dramatic narrative that cautions against the political hubris which is hidden behind our public actions, even if these are motivated by superior and democratic motives (*ibid.*, p.220). The great hubris of both heroes lies in the unwillingness to enter into a dialogic practice that would reciprocally renew each other's initial conceptions (*ibid.*, p.27).

The dramatic poet re-creates the myth in order to call Athenians to self-reflect and self-correct their democratic politics. From this perspective, tragedy attempts to achieve its democratic function by inviting Athenians to reflect on the democratic hubris of failing to acknowledge the other perspective. There is not always a unique, *ultimate*, rational reason, nor an unconditional, just action. Even if our reasons are very 'good' in political terms, they can become equally 'bad' if they are political in the restricted sense of the term (*ibid.*, p.217). In other words, the public space that is ascribed to politics is potentially universal and, owing to its universality, a political decision must consider multiple factors – political and non-political – in order to be *dikaios*¹⁸ and democratic.

It can be argued that the Castoriadian interpretive approach to *Antigone* is positioned at the heart of Winston's approach to narratives and stories as essential

¹⁸ "At once the difficulty in translating *dikaios* by 'just' is clear; for someone in our own culture may use the word 'just' without any reference to or belief in a moral order in the universe [...] To be *dikaios* in Homer is not to transgress that order; thus in Homer the virtue of the *dikaios* is to do what the accepted order requires; and in this his virtue is like every other Homeric virtue. But by the latter part of the fifth century it is possible to ask if it is or is not *dikaiosune* to do what the established order requires; and it is possible to disagree radically as to what it would be to act in accordance with dike, to be *dikaios*." (MacIntyre, 2007, p.134)

educational means in the domain of educational theatre and drama (1998). Winston, examining the educational potential of narrative in moral education, emphasises the impossibility of moral generalisation and the significance of the particularity of ethical judgment (*ibid.*, p.12).

Winston's argument for moral education can be also 'transferred' to the context of *Antigone* as a means for political education. In this context, the Sophoclean play offers the students the "contextual particularity" of a political reality and provides them with the opportunity to explore "the messiness of reality" in its "thickness and complexity", and therefore to make their own judgments for the play (*ibid.*, pp.17, 8). In this syllogistic context, the story of *Antigone* is not viewed as an abstract container of meanings, and the heroes of the play are not viewed as one-dimensional bearers of values (Wiles, 2011, p.23).

The genius of the Greek dramatists lay precisely in their power to do this, to enter vividly into the feelings of the opposing parties in a conflict and to present them on stage in a fashion that was at once both mythic and realistic. (Winston, 1998, p.27)

In this context, students' exploration of the story of the play becomes a "material and embodied" practice that provides students with the given circumstances to make their own meanings of the play and their own political decisions about its issues. The aim is to surpass the didactic and one-sided approaches which idealise one hero's thesis and condemns the other's. The challenge is to invite students to "respond meaningfully to the ambivalence of ordinary experience" and open up possibilities for them to reconstruct what might have happened *if* the heroes had acted differently (*ibid.*, pp.15, 17). In other words, this interpretive and educational approach has the potential to inform students both how to act and how they could inform action (*ibid.*, pp. 11, 12, 15).

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Epistemology

3.1.1 Knowledge-Constitutive interests

Jurgen Habermas' early work, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1972) – having emerged from the tradition of the Frankfurt School and being essentially influenced by Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787) – develops a theory of human knowledge. According to it, the construction of knowledge is subject to human interests, while the latter are accrued by the evolution of human societies and expressed in different social contexts (1972). In this theory of 'knowledge-constitutive interests', Habermas analyses that, at a primal level, knowledge emerges from basic human needs such as from the human relation to "nature or from the cultural break with nature" (Habermas, 1972, p.312). Further elaborating on this argument, he critically notes that although human interests often seem natural derivatives of the interest in self-preservation, they are in fact social constructions. He characteristically says that "what may appear as naked survival is always in its roots a historical phenomenon" (*ibid.*, p.313). In this sense, human knowledge transcends the interest in simple self-preservation and "equally serves as an instrument" in the service of what societies consider, for themselves, the good life (*ibid.*).

The knowledge-constitutive interests theory defines specific categories of interests, according to which different approaches are developed to apprehend ground reality. Respectively, different kinds of knowledge are constructed and different instruments for the conduct of good life are invented. In this context, Habermas argues that

Information that expands our power of technical control; interpretations that make possible the orientation of action within common traditions; and analyses that free consciousness from its dependence on hypostatized powers. (*ibid.*)

These powers constitute different kinds of knowledge and acquire different institutional forms in the context of social structures. Therefore: the human interest in technical control is institutionalised in the domain of work; interest in interpretation and communication within common traditions is institutionalised in language; and, finally, interest in emancipation is expressed in the form of power (*ibid.*).

These three categories of human interests, apart from being expressed in social structures, constitute scientific categories with respective research concerns and questions. In this theoretical framework neither knowledge, nor social sciences and, hence, nor social scientific inquiry, can be considered an independent entity having an autonomous theoretical 'life of its own'. This is because "the mind can always reflect back upon the interest structure" that indicates the research questions according to which kind of knowledge is constructed (*ibid.*).

This theory contributes to the domain of epistemology and social science in the following ways. First, by connecting the knowledge construction to various human interests, it liberates the social science and social science research from the idea of a single approach to knowledge, whether it comes from a positivist or from an interpretive perspective. It denies the notions of a unique reality, a single truth and an objective way of making sense of it, whilst, at the same time, questioning the exclusive belief in the subjective worlds that are meant to be understood only by the analysis of the subjective meanings of the individuals. Acknowledging that "different forms of science not only employ different modes of reasoning, but also [...] serve different kinds of interest

through creating or constituting knowledge” (Kemmis, 1995, p.12), Habermas’ theory legitimates various forms of knowledge and recognises that each kind of social science and inquiry differs in terms of content and claims, according to the reason for which it is undertaken (Habermas, 1972).

In this sense, it questions the absolute scientific authority as it “involves a reversal of the proper relationship between epistemology and science” and demonstrates “how it is science that should be justified by epistemology and not vice versa” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.134). This reversal entails an alternative reasoning regarding the criteria of evaluating social research because it suggests that the validity of each research project derives from its epistemological framework. From this perspective, Habermas argues that acknowledgement of the connections between the knowledge-constitutive interests and the logical-methodological courses that each of them implies contributes to the conduct of more informed, accurate and critically conducted research projects (1972, p.308):

Fundamental methodological decisions ... have the singular character of being neither arbitrary nor compelling. For their criterion is the metalogical necessity of interests that can neither prescribe nor represent, but with which we must instead come to terms”. (*ibid.*, p.312)

3.1.2 Habermas’ Approach to Knowledge

Habermas’ epistemic theory, in its ultimate form, constitutes an amalgam of the Frankfurt School Critical Theory, itself influenced by Marxist critiques and by American Pragmatism founded by C. S. Peirce, William James and John Dewey. It is argued that although critical theory and pragmatism are considered to have a range of conceptual and ideological similarities (Winch and Gingell, 1999, p.180), they present a range of differences in terms of origins and contents that seem to render them as two distinct,

social theories. Studying Habermas' social theory, one observes two main interpretations of his work. Some theorists analyse Habermas as a second generation Frankfurt critical theorist who made a pragmatist "twist", both during the '70s and after his preoccupation with the theories of communicative action and rationality (Heath, 2006, p.124; Edgar, 2006). Others, who view his work as a whole, agree with the viewpoint that Habermas reformulated critical theory by ascribing it in an essentially pragmatic dimension, owing especially to the emphasis he gave to the intersubjective procedures of communication and rationality (Rehg and Bohman, 2001). In this sense, for some theorists, Habermas is mostly viewed as a critical theorist, whilst for others his pragmatic identity is prioritised. However, I argue that the most beneficial approach to Habermas' epistemic theory lies in a well-balanced synthesis of its critical and pragmatic structures. In this line of reasoning, Carspecken adopts a "critical pragmatics" (2001, p.10) perspective as an epistemological basis of Houston critical ethnography. In a similar way, for the purposes of this study, I would rather adopt a "pragmatist critical theory" perspective in which critical theory constitutes the structural basis, and the "pragmatic ethos" determines the quality of the procedures (White, 2004, p.311, 314). In order to make sense of Habermas' synthesis of the two theories, it is useful to present separately the key features that Habermas 'borrowed' from each theory. Further, the way in which they have been interwoven will be demonstrated in an analytic examination of key constituent concepts of this study.

3.1.3 Critical Theory

The critical analysis of society seeks, in very general terms, to offer a political evaluation of society, and to guide socio-political praxis (Edgar, 2006, p.31). Considering the main conceptual apparatuses of critical theory, "one cannot point to a single universally shared critical theory", but one can point to a common attempt to

assess the social forms of domination, and to rethink and reconstruct modes of social emancipation (Giroux, 2009, p.27). Its core target is neither fulfilled by a theoretical account of society, nor by social criticism alone. Rather, its intention is extended to the recreation of society. This recreation, or, reinvention in Castoriadis' terms (See chapter one) should be based on equality and democracy for all its members (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.26). "Its purpose is not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them" (*ibid.*). In this sense, critical social theory not only constitutes a theoretical movement, but attempts to be an 'enacted' social science and research tradition. In their approach to knowledge, critical theorists reject the idea of 'pure' knowledge - conceived in a social vacuum - and argue that human knowledge is constructed according to the historical development of human societies and in response to the issues that the real world poses to them (Edgar, 2006, p.32).

For this reason, critical social sciences do not target the application of a fixed theory to a social context or a test of a theoretical claim because they view knowledge as a synthesis or an interaction of theory and practice and vice versa. Critical social sciences, aiming to conduct the members of a social context to the realisation of a critically informed, social action, view theory and practice as mutually interdependent parts of the same social and cognitive process (Kemmis, 1995, p.15).

3.1.4 The Pragmatic Influences

Similar to the principles of critical theory and to the Habermasian approach to knowledge, the way in which American Pragmatism – especially after James – perceives knowledge opposes the idea of the value-laden knowledge and anticipates that "our inquiries are related to our concerns" and that "truth is determined according to the criteria appropriate to a mode of inquiry" (Winch and Gingell, 1999, p.179). Respectively, scientific inquiry accrues from the needs of real context and is constructed

according to its social particularities. In this sense, knowledge is not acquired in a social vacuum, but is created within the practical domain of social cooperation and interaction.

Apart from this epistemic convergence between the pragmatic and the critical approaches, critical theory and pragmatism are also similar in the sense that they integrate a fundamental political character (Margolis, 2006). This political character entails a range of democratic functions in terms of values, structures and purposes. As has been discussed, critical theory is democratically oriented because it targets social emancipation through critical reasoning and social praxis. The democratic dimension of pragmatism lies in its preoccupation with cultural and social pluralism, and in its goal to “stimulate dialogue with and among citizens about the appropriate conditions for social cooperation” (Regh and Bohman, 2001, pp.3-4). White, analysing Habermas’ pragmatic turn, argues that the “pragmatic ethos” in the setting of a social inquiry would inescapably include “a plurality of perspectives” (White, 2004, p.314) during the phase of the construction of research questions, and in the process of inferences and data analysis. This kind of pluralism, which renders the voices of the participants a structural element of a social scientific inquiry, becomes an instrument of paramount importance to the disposition of the critical researcher; this is because it enables the researcher to deal critically and democratically with significant social problems and concerns when they are detected by the participants themselves (*ibid.*, p.315).

3.1.5 Pragmatic Critical Theory

At this point it would be useful to view the distinct limitations of critical theory and pragmatism, and subsequently discuss how they are mutually benefitted by their epistemic association. One of the main criticisms that critical theory has received consists in its normative quality in the process of emancipating the ‘oppressed’ social groups. The first area of problematisation refers to the criteria according to which

critical researchers inspect and determine the social injustices of a specific social context, and, respectively, to the appropriateness of the solutions they provide. A growing difficulty has been experienced with regard to the inquirers' ability to "specify the substantive, real interest of the oppressed category of actors" (White, 2004, p.317) and to provide practically meaningful alternatives. This problematisation implies that critical theorists, being preoccupied with the social emancipation of different groups of actors, might often impose their own perceptions "expressed in terms of hypothesis, about the oppressiveness of some practices or institutions in a given situation" (*ibid.*, p.321). Nevertheless, there might be a range of different, implicit perspectives among participants that could be revealed by a pluralistic or an intersubjective cooperation – perspectives that could modify the orientation and the realisation of a research project. This re-orientation would be particularly meaningful for a critical inquiry because it would construct a more inclusive social criticism and a more collective social action (White, 2004; Rehg and Bohman, 2001).

On the other side of the coin, critical theory, being preoccupied with the "intellectual and material conditions in which non-alienated communication and interaction can occur", would, in turn, upgrade the political awareness of a pluralistic communication and rationality (Habermas, 1972; McCarthy, 1985). It is argued that if pragmatism targets multi-perspective, inclusive communication among individuals, it must find ways to deal with issues of power and with ideological systems. Richard Bernstein (1992) notes this uncritical or apolitical dimension of pragmatism, and White explains that

although democratic values, seem implied by pragmatism, it is also the case that this invocation has often been operationalized in ways that are decidedly unsuspicious of structures of power. (2004, p.315)

An inquiry that operates according to the rules of equal and pluralistic communication, and which aims for a pluralistic consideration and recreation of reality, needs to examine the ideological systems and the power relations that characterise the structures and the organisation of a social context. In this sense, critical reflection and ideological critique become significant instruments for social researchers and the participants because they provide them with the appropriate consciousness and methodology to ‘unmask’ the institutionalised ideologies that remain implicit, yet powerful, within different social structures (McCarthy, 1985, p.88).

With this in mind it is argued that a synthesis of Habermasian critical approach to knowledge, as analysed in *Theory and Practice* and in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, and of the ‘pragmatic ethos’ as integrated in Habermas’ theory of communicative action and rationality, constitute the epistemological basis of this research praxis. Therefore, in the following section, I will seek to demonstrate how these influences are integrated into three main concepts that also permeate the subsequently analysed methodological choices, as well as the cognitive aims of my research project.

3.1.5.1 Reflection

In the Habermasian context of critical social sciences, the pursuit and the practice of reflection in all its possible forms – namely self-reflection and dialogical/pluralistic reflection – become a preoccupation of paramount importance to the individuals involved. Habermas argues that self-reflection, in individual and collective forms, activates a certain kind of a retrospective and introspective way of thinking that has the potential to reveal hidden social constraints, and to release “the subject from dependence on hypostatized powers” (1972, p.310). Like the Freudian techniques of psychoanalysis which have influenced Habermas’ theory, self-reflection

enables participants to rethink and reconsider social practices that were previously perceived as impossible to change (1972).

The possibility of changing these practices is often ignored by the participants, owing to their seemingly natural or inevitable character. Nevertheless, Habermas argues that these contexts of social cooperation, which “express ideologically frozen relations of dependence [...] can in principle be transformed” (*ibid.*, p.310). Reflection alone might not be able to transform these relations, but can render them “inapplicable” (*ibid.*); reflection might not be able to cancel a social relation of domination but it is able to cancel its imposition in a social context. By reflecting on social contexts of cooperation, individuals and social groups are able to realise the different forms of domination and social injustice which are hidden in their structures.

3.1.5.2 Critique

When this kind of reflection, analysed above, is able to question the justice or the political correctness of a social context, the notion of social criticism or critique is involved. From this perspective social criticism or ‘critique’ could be viewed both as a component or an extension of the notion of reflection. Critique, as adopted from the Marxist to the Habermasian theoretical context, is a method that liberates

individuals from the causal efficacy of those social processes that distort communication and understanding and so allow them to engage in the critical reconstruction of suppressed possibilities and desires for emancipation. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.137)

Critique functions as a social practice which aims to illuminate various distortions imposed upon social contexts by dominant interests and discourses (Edgar, 2006, p.16, pp.71-72). However, for social groups to be able to critique or critically reflect on the

institutionalised power relations inherent in a range of social contexts, they need to deal with, and disclose, the ideological systems they entail.

3.1.5.3 Ideology Critique

The term ‘ideology’, as well as the term critique, originates in the Marxist tradition of social theory, in which ideological patterns are not confined to the explicit political discourses, but are integrated in a wide range of social activities as well as in contents of culture (Edgar, 2006, p.69, See Section 1.4). From this point of view, different cultural categories, ranging from education to arts, are considered determinant practices of political oppression (Althusser, 1999). In this sense, these cultural categories can be used as resources for the examination and the analysis of different ideological systems. In this context, ideology critique not only deals with the explicit political discourses that unequivocally entail ideological statements, but is, rather, preoccupied with a wide range of cultural categories, such as education, arts, media, and the ways in which they implicitly impose dominant ideologies.

From this perspective, it can be argued that the three main concepts or procedures of critical theory and critical social sciences function interdependently, as all presuppose and entail the others. In particular, it is argued that critical reflection and ideology critique presuppose one another for their respective realisations. This becomes more obvious if one reflects on the target of critical social sciences to “expose the real meaning – in terms of political interests being served – that is concealed by the apparently meaningless or inevitable ideological appearance of society” (Edgar, 2006, p.16). In this context, critical reflection – especially when it concerns social structures such as educational systems or curricula – becomes essential and enlightening when it is able to reveal deeply hidden ideological systems that permeate the majority of the educational practices, as well as our beliefs regarding the aims, the content and the

pedagogy of an educational system. In a similar way, in order for the ideology critique to be fundamental and self-correcting in the interests of a democratic society – instead of superficial and reactionary without real reasons – it must integrate a critical stance in itself and the capacity of self-judgment.

3.1.5.4 The Communicative Procedures of Reflection and Critique

Apart from their mutually beneficial interaction, the practices' critical reflection and socio-ideological critique – in order to be deeply democratic and, of equal importance, updated to the social reality – must be based on “a political theory about social life and, equally important, about its own processes and their effects on social life” (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.146). It is argued that Habermas' theory of communicative action (See Section 2.1.4) provides an appropriate political theory about social life and about the epistemic effects of critical inquiry, because it includes dialogue among and with citizens; therefore, it guarantees its relevance to their actual issues. Key principles and practices of communicative action and rationality are able to create a sufficient basis for a collective critical reflection and political action because – based on the ‘pragmatic ethos’ analysed above – they promote the idea of social and methodological dialogue with the contextual particularities of each real life context (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Carpsecken, 1996, 2001). Within the context of communicative action, dialogue among individuals must have certain performative presuppositions which lie mostly in participants' commitment to valid claims of truth, rightness and sincerity (Habermas, 2001, pp.14-15). In this way, the construction of knowledge and the action oriented communication are not guided by relations of power, but instead depend on the unforced and honest mutual agreement of the participants (Bohman, 2003; Habermas 2001; Carpsecken, 1996). Therefore, in order for any claim to knowledge to be legitimately constructed, it must be socially accepted (Carspecken,

2001, p.7). Respectively, for any social praxis to be coordinated, it must bear the freely chosen commitment of the ensemble.

This pluralistic mode of social cooperation equally concerns the epistemological and methodological procedures, which, in the context of a critical social inquiry, must be critically unified, with acknowledgement of their “heterogeneous methods and presuppositions” (Bohman, 2003, p.94). Considering the variety of methodological approaches, Habermas argues that

[c]ritical theory does not relate to established lines or research as a competitor; starting from its concept of the rise of modern societies, it attempts to explain the specific limitations and relative rights of those approaches. (Habermas, 1987, p.375 cited in Bohman, 2003, p.94)

In this sense, critical social sciences “must bear the tension of divergent approaches under one roof” (*ibid.*). This perspective, recognising the legitimacy of different research methodologies, not only defines the criteria of a pluralistic social criticism, but also recognises “the pluralism inherent in various methods and theories of social inquiry” (Bohman, 2003, p.92).

3.1.5.5 The Second-person Perspective

This communicative approach emphasises the significance of considering and integrating different perspectives in the process of social criticism and critical inquiry. In this context, it is suggested both to the social scientist and to the agent – apart from including the perspective of the others – that they develop, themselves, a certain kind of communicative or dialogic competence in order to be flexible and capable of adopting and employing a variety of social perspectives (Bohman, 2003). This approach, that recognises the need to view things from different social perspectives as individuals, even

if there are no alternative viewpoints, is also defined as “second-person perspective” (*ibid.*, p.96). This is in contradistinction to the first- or the third- person perspectives of interpretive and positivistic counterparts that respectively focus on the subjective meanings of a social situation or on its objective explanation (*ibid.*). The practical ability to change stances and view things differently enables agents and researchers: to have access to a wider range of meanings; to make a more informed and inclusive critique; and, subsequently, to attach a more democratic quality to their social actions and enterprises.

In a recapitulation, Bohman argues that the ability to change perspectives provides a special self-reflective – and I would argue, self-correcting – quality in two reflexive practices: science and democracy (*ibid.*, p.104) because it employs the know-how of a participant in dialogue or communication (Bohman, 2000, p.96). Moreover, this dialectic thinking is essentially democratic, not only because it has the potential to include the voices of those who would be otherwise excluded, but also because it integrates the ‘unfinished’, process-character of democratic politics (for the process-character of democracy (See Section 2.1). As has been discussed in the first chapter of this study, the collective preoccupation with continuous self-reflection and self-correction constitutes a structural practice of democratic politics. In this sense, the dialogical principles of communicative action, as a form of dialectics, becomes crucial in the revelation of the “insufficiencies and imperfections of ‘finished systems of thought” because “[i]t reveals incompleteness where completeness is claimed” (Held cited in Giroux, 2009, p.34).

3.1.6 The Interventional Character of Critical Social Sciences

The aim “to initiate public process of self-reflection” in a communicative form (Bohman, 2003, p.100) is a fundamental concern of critical theory; however, critical

social sciences equally aim to create practical alternatives which contribute to the process of overcoming the distortions and limitations that social groups encounter during the process of the critical self-reflection (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.144). As Carr and Kemmis argue, a critical social science is

one that goes beyond critique to critical praxis; that is, a form of practice in which the 'enlightenment' of actors come to bear directly in the transformed social action. (*ibid.*).

Transcending the explanatory and interpretive limits, critical inquiries have interventional – or as argued elsewhere, normative – qualities (Bohman, 2003), which take the form of practical proposals for social change. Following the course of pluralistic critical reflection, the coordination of action is an equally communicative process, because its organisation is based on the same dialogic process and on the same validity claims which promote and benefit its collective character.

3.2 Methodology

In an attempt to justify the methodological framework of this research, I seek to make explicit the syllogism behind the chosen methodologies. Before the analysis, it is essential to remind the reader that this research was a practical attempt to refine my thinking with regards to the theoretical model of the ensemble-based theatre learning. The revision of the theoretical model does not constitute a goal in itself. Rather, it aims to re-inform further practice. Following Lather's theoretical framework for praxis in social research, the fieldwork attempted to nurture the conceptual basis of the ensemble theatre for active citizenship, by providing it with insights that grew out of practical, political groundings, from the real context of the Greek public education (Lather, 1991, p.11). In a similar, but not identical, methodological frame, Kemmis also views praxis in social science research as a way to develop phronesis (Kemmis, 2010). This means that praxis provides us with the practical circumstances to act and the opportunity to reflect on the consequences of our actions. This process informs both our subsequent action in uncertain circumstances, and the moral or the political rules that we have in the disposition of phronesis (*ibid.*, p.421).

In order to inform and organise my praxis in school, my research design was constructed and organised on the basis of two different methodological paradigms. To address the demands of this research project, I draw upon two different methodologies. The overall design implemented elements from "political action research" and from case study research (Somekh and Noffke, 2005, p. 90). I will go on to show how the political action research approach lent to the project its aspiration for political intervention and transformation. Moreover, it structured the evolution in a spiral of cycles (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.162; Reason and Bradbury, 2008, p.1). At the same time, the emphasis that case study research places on the singularity and the uniqueness of each educational

context enabled the cyclical re-planning to realise the significance of these particularities and adapt the research procedures, or their interpretations, accordingly. This contextual emphasis encouraged the construction of a unique narrative for each school, which was also influenced by the “inherent story-telling potential in the case study approach” (Simons, 2009, p.4). Therefore, I first determine the characteristics of action research; discuss the reasons and the ways in which these elements are implemented; and acknowledge the limitations of this approach. Subsequently, I present the methodological features of case study and I justify the incorporation of case study in my own inquiry, as well as the ways in which it informed the overall meaning making procedures of this research process.

3.2.1 Action Research

Action research constitutes a widely developed methodological tradition in qualitative inquiry, and maintains a prominent position in educational research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005, p.561). In one of its initial definitions, action research has been viewed as a “systematic inquiry, made public” (Stenhouse, 1975 cited in Noffke, 2009, p.19), while, in more contemporary approaches, it is viewed as a more complex way “of approaching the study of human beings” (McIntosh, 2010, p.32), informed by a range of post-structural, critical (Carr and Kemmis, 1986) or other theories (Griffiths, 2009, p.89).

In this context, Noffke classifies action research according to whether its main focus is “professional”, “personal” or “political” (Somekh and Noffke, 2005, p.90). Action research projects that are professionally oriented aim to improve services or products that are offered to clients in professional environments (*ibid.*). In the second category of action research, Noffke classifies projects that are motivated by reasons of personal development. In this research framework, the main targets lie in deepening the

practitioners' own understandings and improving their own educational skills (*ibid.*). Action research, undertaken for improving the pedagogic skills of oneself, constitutes a particularly popular category for action research and is often considered the original form of this methodology. This action research category is not necessarily separated from either of the other categories because it can often be combined with the professional and the political orientations of a research project. The third category of action research is politically oriented, identified with the idea of positive social change, and underpins a range of participatory, emancipatory and critical practices in social and educational contexts (Walker, 2009, p.301; Kemmis, 2008).

3.2.1.1 The Political Dimension

In summary, the practices of political action research focus on socio-political issues, such as social reconstruction, social justice or democratic social procedures (Giffiths, 2009, p.93). These differentiated orientations often vary in essence or in procedures, owing to their distinctive ideological infrastructures or to their partial differentiations in terms of process. Nevertheless, the aspiration of an interventionist action, which aims to achieve a kind of socio-political improvement or transformation, is commonly admitted. According to Noffke, the common ground that these political action research approaches share lies in the ameliorative social action and/or in the deep connection with a form of social struggle (2009, p.12). Similarly, Griffiths claims that any research which explicitly conceives itself as

prioritizing social reconstruction and transformation, may conveniently be described under one category as political action research. (2009, p.93)

3.2.1.2 The Transformative Aspiration

Therefore, it is argued that one of the most distinguishing features of political action research consists in its “obstinate” focus on socio-political change and transformation (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005, p.564). It is also claimed that, in this context, action research is not exclusively viewed as the problem-solving methodology which is undertaken to address a problem. Or, in other words, the

‘[P]roblem’ should be interpreted loosely here so that it could refer to the need to introduce innovation into some aspect of a school’s established programme (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.307)

As in the case of my project, the “driving force will be an impetus for change/innovation” (Somekh, 2004, p.91) which can widely aim to contribute to “the service of the human flourishing” (Reason and Brandbury, 2008, p.1). This aspiration for a transformative or interventionist action constitutes one of the most significant targets of my research in schools. As analysed above, the ensemble-based theatre learning integrates a range of ideological and pedagogic features that are antithetical to the context of Greek public education. Moreover, it is characterised by a fundamentally critical stance to the National Curriculum of *Elements of Theatre* as well as to the National Guidelines for teaching Sophocles’ *Antigone*. Therefore, the vision of a critically conceived, innovative research action constituted one of the major methodological influences from political action research. Therefore, both the ensemble based pedagogy, and the multiperspectival exploration of *Antigone*, aimed to function as a practical critique to the official Curriculum of Theatre and the exploration of Sophocles’ *Antigone*, whilst at the same time aspiring to suggest an alternative, more inclusive and multiperspectival approach to the aforesaid curricular subjects.

3.2.1.3 The Cyclical Process of Reflective Re-planning

Apart from the transformative orientation, the cyclical development of action research, and the possibilities it bears for reflection, was also very influential for the structure of my own research design. From Lewin's early definition, action research is conceived to be structured in a series of cycles (Somekh, 2005, p.89). In Lewin's theoretical framework, 'reconnaissance' constitutes the starting point of the inquiry, while data collection and analysis follow in order to inform the next cycle of reflection and action (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, there is no specified pattern to render the cyclical process "tied up in forms of rule and regulation in its application" (McIntosh, 2010, p.181). The cyclical design is open and adaptable to the needs of each research project and to the challenges of each social context. The phases of planning, acting, reflecting and re-planning "are only intended as rough planning tools. Not exact representations of a process" (Somekh, 2005, p.91). Therefore, these stages can be viewed as a systematic opportunity for the researcher to ask "questions that indicate a step-by-step approach" (Griffiths, 2009, p.91). It is argued that the realisation of the essential, instead of the technical or mechanical, significance of the spiral of cycles permits the researcher to recognise the reflective potential that inheres in this process.

3.2.1.4 The Reflective Dimension of the Spiral of Cycles

The practice of "revisability" and the "adaptive-evolutionary" progression it entails, constitute, here, a possibility of paramount importance that bridges the cyclical process with the reflective preoccupation (Griffiths, 2009, p.89; Altricher and Posch, 2009, p.222). There is a process of

planning a change, acting and observing the process and the consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences; and re-planning, acting and observing again,

reflecting again and so on...”[Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005, p.563]

This process is substantial, because it provides the educational inquiry with the potential to become a living, context-generated process that can be neither predetermined nor simply “‘‘applied’’ (Reason and Brandbury, 2008, p.1; *ibid.*). In other words, this “‘‘adaptive-evolutionary’’ process is connected both to the reflective and the self-transformative agenda of action research because it systematises the possibility to reflect and be adapted according to the emerging issues (Altricher and Posch, 2009, p.222).

3.2.1.5 The Cyclical Process of Reflection and Self-transformation

The multifaceted French existential philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre ascribes to reflection a sense of transformation by claiming that “‘‘the reflected upon is altered profoundly by the reflection because it is self-conscious’’ (McIntosh, 2010, p.42). This “‘‘conscious awareness’’ constitutes a fundamental step towards transformation and self-correction because it enables the individuals involved to

become alert to clues about how it may be possible to transform the practices they are producing and reproducing through their current ways of working. If their current practices are the product of one particular set of intentions, conditions, and circumstances, other (transformed) practices may be produced and reproduced under other (or transformed) intentions, conditions and circumstances’’. (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005, p.565)

The transformation of my own theoretical frameworks, and their respective practices, constitutes a process which is at the heart of the self-corrective intention within a democratic enterprise (See Section 2.2). Therefore, the transformation of my educational practice and my professional knowledge was viewed as a desired challenge, not only

because it asserted my intention to change “with others” instead of changing others “out there” (Reason and Brandbury, 2008, p.1). The necessity of this self-corrective intention lies in the essence of the reflective and re-creative framework of the political theory of this study (See section 2.2).

3.2.1.6 Limitations

I acknowledge the limitations that are often ascribed to action research, particularly when it derives from the critical theory tradition and, therefore, entails transformative or emancipatory aspirations. Cohen *et al.* identify a range of criticisms that concern action research practice (2007, p.304). These include: unrealistic aspirations with regards to social transformation; ignorance or neglect of social complexities owing to an academic sense of critique; or imposed agendas for empowerment and emancipation. In a similar line of reasoning, although Patty Lather supports the critical dimensions of research practices, she expresses several concerns with regards to the ways in which emancipation or empowerment is ‘imposed’ (1991, p.3).

My study aspires to be critical and transformative, but not necessarily empowering and emancipating, in the traditional sense. The ensemble-based learning might develop the potential for participants to acquire further initiatives, to practise their agency or to be empowered, but this does not mean that participants are *pre*-considered as oppressed. Students and their context will inform my practice and the level of transformation that needs to be targeted. In this sense, the principal way for addressing these issues lies in the incorporation of case study methodology in my own research design. In this way, students’ reality will define both the direction of the transformative endeavour, and the ensemble-based learning. In the analysis of the data, the reader will

have the possibility to observe the ways in which the research project changed in order to address the particular issues that each context generated.

In the same line of reasoning, in order to address the risk of making an exclusively theoretical critique to the curriculum and the pedagogy of the subject of theatre and of the teaching of Sophocles' *Antigone*, I will also re-consider my critique according to the particularities of the social context. Curricular critique, apart from being an academic preoccupation of critical pedagogy, derives from the specific consequences that specific curricula bring to the learning environment. In this context, the case study perspective will enable me to re-formulate my critical perspective according to the specific constraints that are observed in each educational context.

3.2.2 Case Study

The function of the project was explored in two different classrooms of separate schools, in the context of different curricular subjects.¹⁹ The factors that differentiated each case did not only consist in formal educational factors that determined each school's organisation, but were also related to the singularity of each social group of students. Both the official structures of each educational institution, and the particularity of the educational *modus vivendi* of each social group, generated the need to focus on the uniqueness of each case, and to explore the ensemble process of learning in the terms that each context indicated (Simons, 2009).

Case study constitutes a popular methodology in educational research and is a very wide methodological category. The definitions vary, but there is agreement about the singularity that characterises the case study research (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003; Patton,

¹⁹ The first school accommodated this project in the module of *Theatre Elements* (See section 3.10), while the second school accommodated the project in the context of *Ancient Greek Learning: Ancient Greek Grammar: Sophocles' Antigone* (See section 3.11).

2002). Stake underlines the multiplicity through which we might approach a case, but he also insists on the essentiality of maintaining the focus on its particularity:

We could study it analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures or hermeneutically, organically or culturally, and by mixed methods – but we concentrate, at least for the time being, on the case”. (2000, p.435 cited in Patton, 2002, p.447).

Simons, while emphasising the depth and the multiperspectivity that should characterise the case study, notes the openness of what can be defined as a case. In this context, she defines case study as

an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a ‘real life’ context”. (2009, p.21)

From this perspective, it is argued that one of the methodological advantages of case study lies in the fact that it orients the researcher’s interest in the specific contextualised instances (Winston, 1998, p.79). In order for the exploration of the ensemble-based theatre learning to be meaningful – and, further, capable of contributing in order to inform theory and subsequent practice, – its evolution is inextricably integrated in the ways in which students experienced the process.

Taking into account the situated character of education (Bruner, 1974), and of educational research (Winston, 1998), I decided to explore the function of the ensemble-based model of learning in a real school-life context. I did so under similar “constraints of curriculum, time and space as faced the class teachers” in their professional lives (Winston, 1998, p.80). Otherwise, there was the risk of idealising the project’s impact, or, of having the positivistic illusion of ‘testing’ it, in objective terms, or, I would argue, in a social vacuum (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.11-12).

In this line of reasoning, I avoided researching the schools as representative or stereotypical examples, and I attempted to interpret the meanings of each social group in its own terms. Therefore, I did not classify the fieldwork in the categories of “critical cases, extreme cases, typical cases, and heterogeneous cases” (Patton, 2002, p.452). Rather, the emphasis was given on comprehending and interpreting the educational patterns and the social relations that constructed the reality of each classroom. In this manner, I intended to explore the ways in which the overall project interacted with the specific social groups. The first target was both to understand “how” the project functioned for each social group, as well as to interpret “why” the project was oriented or developed in this or the other way (Yin, 2003, p.1). Subsequently, each case was intended to inform both the theory and the practice of the ensemble-based theatre learning. In this sense it is characterised as instrumental. Stake uses this definition

where a case is chosen to explore an issue or research question determined on some other ground, that is, the case is chosen to gain insight or understanding into something else. (Stake, 1995, pp.3-4 cited in Simons, 2009, p.21)

Nevertheless, this classification does not exclude intrinsic interest (*ibid.*) because, in order for the function of the ensemble to be understood, the particularities of each social context must be acknowledged and interpreted. The following points articulate some intrinsic and some instrumental sub-questions of the research:

Intrinsic interest:

- Which is the participants’ relation to theatre (previous experiences and perceptions)?
- What students think of politics (political consciousness and habitus)?
- What is the participants’ educational background (educational experiences)?

- How could this project respond or be adapted to their previous experiences?

Instrumental interest:

- How students respond to the process?
- Which are the reasons for their responses?
- Are they influenced by the process?
- If and how the process influences their participation in theatre?
- If and how the process influences their social interaction?
- If and how the process influences their political thinking and habitus?

The story-element:

Apart from the emphasis in the comprehension of each classroom's context, the second reason for which case study methodology was implemented in my research lies in the story-telling potential that case study provides. Winston emphasises the story element in the context of a case study and argues that "case studies are stories – contextualized" (1998, p.80). The ways in which the project is conducted in each case, the practices that structured it and the responses that it elicited, all constitute the story "of the evolution, development and experience of the particular case" (Simons, 2009, p.147). The strength of this framework consists of its potential to bear the holistic nature of the meaning which "is indeed more than the sum of its parts" (*ibid.*, p.124). Therefore, the report of the function of the ensemble is constructed as an interpretive narrative that will analyse the story of each case.

3.3 Issues of Validity

The theoretical, epistemological and methodological frameworks of this study indicate the rejection of the notion of a universal truth/knowledge, and accept the

possibility of a situated form of truth/knowledge with a focus on daily life and narrative within the context (Kvale, 1995, p.21). Therefore, the validation of this research project is moved from a final test on the objective results, and focuses instead on the ways in which “the research process re-orient, focuses and energizes participants towards knowing reality in order to transform it” (Lather, 1991, p.68). Lather refers to this kind of validity as “catalytic” (*ibid.*). The same kind of validity can be also described through the combination of Kvale’s communicative and pragmatic validity.

According to Kvale’s postmodern approach to social research validity, the communicative and the pragmatic validity are distinguished. This means that communicative validity is achieved through a speech act, a linguistic articulation of the matter at stake, while pragmatic validity is exclusively manifested in action. More specifically,

Communicative validity involves testing the validity of knowledge claims in a dialogue. Valid knowledge is not merely obtained by approximations to a given social reality; it involves a conversation about the social reality: What is a valid observation is decided through the argumentation of the participants in a discourse. (1995, p.30)

In the context of pragmatic validity,

Knowledge is action rather than observation; the effectiveness of our knowledge beliefs is demonstrated by the effectiveness of our action. By pragmatic validation of a knowledge claim, justification is superseded by application. (*ibid.*, p.32)

Nevertheless, it is argued that the combination of both categories of validation is more suitable to the framework. The theoretical syllogisms of this democratic-oriented research project view communicative and pragmatic validity as interdependent practices

that succeed and complement each other.²⁰ In this respect, communication facilitates and organises action, while action re-informs communication. Taking into account the aforesaid conceptions for validity, it is argued that the validity of this project consists of three axes. The first axis lies in participants' claims with regards to recognition or non-recognition "of the reality-altering impact of the research process" (Lather, 1991, p.68). The second validation axis depends on "whether a knowledge statement is accompanied by action, or whether it instigates changes of action" (Kvale, 1995, p.34). Finally, the third axis refers to participants' gaining of "self-understanding and, ultimately, self-determination through research participation" (Lather, 1991, p.68).

In order for these axes to be deeply explored — not only, yet predominantly, the particular methods of gathering data — the overall design of the project was accordingly designed in order to address the complexity of these types of validity. In the first place, methodological triangulation was adapted in order to respond to the different needs of the project. The interventionist and the cyclically reflective quality of action research was combined with the context-orientation of case study, in order to create a dialogic narrative that described the ways in which the project functioned for the specific educational situation. Second, different methods for gathering data – that will be further analysed – were used in order for different meanings and understandings to be recorded and interpreted from multiple perspectives (Simons, 2009, p.131). Finally, transparency which reveals the problematic areas of the process will also be included in the narrative of each case. Before analytically presenting the methods that were triangulated for the gathering of data, it is essential to refer to the reason for which different methods have been combined, as well as other types of triangulation that were adapted.

²⁰ For more details on the ways in which speech and action inter-complement and 'inter-validate' each other in the public space and in the democratic practices, see section 2.1.

3.4 Triangulation

Throughout the bibliography of social inquiry and educational research, triangulation can be claimed to constitute an intertwined method of the concept of validity (Seale, 1999; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). However, it is noted that in the context of this project, triangulation was used neither just as a check nor as a method which “assumes a single fixed reality that can be known objectively through the use of multiple methods” (Seale, 1999, p.53). Rather, it is employed as an amalgam of Silverman’s approach and Ciroucel’s conception, according to which triangulation addresses the situated work of accounts without undercutting the one over the other. It additionally suggests that every reading of data provides a new interpretation that will deepen the others (Seale, 1999, pp.58-60). From this perspective, triangulation denies certainty and stability and seeks a deepened understanding in the open and complex space of the fieldwork. The first level of triangulation constitutes data triangulation.

Data-source triangulation involves the comparison of data relating to the same phenomenon but deriving from different phases of the fieldwork, different points in the temporal cycles occurring in the setting, or the accounts of different participants [...] differentially located in the setting. (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.183)

Consequently, specific thematic unities that derive from the research questions – such as students’ attitude toward **ensemble ability** or **self-instituting ability**²¹ – will be examined, both in terms of the real level of the drama process, and in relation to the fictional level of the theatre.

Apart from methodological and data triangulation, the final level of triangulation concerns the methods that are utilised to gather data. In this context, different methods

²¹ The specific codes are further analytically presented

will function inter-complementarily in order to provide comprehending and interpretive depth to the meaning making of the events. Units of data that are gathered from observations will be further examined through the reviewing of video-recordings and, mainly, through participants' responses, understandings and perspectives as formulated in interviews (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003, p.121). In this way, units of data that refer to the same thematic categories will be synthesised or contrasted in order to inform the overall interpretation of the process.

3.5 Methods

3.5.1 Research Journal

The research diary was one method which was used from the planning phase to the final levels of data analysis. Qualitative researchers in a variety of disciplines – medicine, law, education, the social sciences and the humanities – have since found writing as a method of inquiry to be a viable way in which to learn about themselves and their research topic. (Richardson and Pierre, 2005, p.959). Whether they are referred to as fieldnotes, research journals, diaries, log books, or lab books, all these written methods are important companions to the research process. First, fieldnotes function as an “external memory for researchers to note from concrete actions to deep feelings and thoughts” (Altricher, 2005, p.24). Second, they acquire a reflective quality which is often ascribed to the act of writing about oneself, one’s actions and one’s experience. Progoff argues that there is a reflective and revealing potential in the act of writing, because it is the ultimate way of

getting feedback from ourselves, and in so doing, it enables us to experience in a full and open-ended way, the movement of our lives as a whole and the meaning that follows from reflecting on that movement. (Progoff, 1992 cited in Janestick, 1999, p.507)

Apart from the ethnographic modes of inquiry, both educational action research and case study have a rich tradition of drawing upon the diary (Altricher *et al.*, 2000, p.12).

One of the significant advantages of a research journal as a method for gathering data lies in the accessibility and the familiarity of the methodical instrument. The research diary is easy to use at any time during the research period. “Writing a diary is simpler and more familiar than any other research methods, such as interviewing”, because it is always in the researcher’s disposition to use it (Altricher *et al.*, 2000, p.10).

The accessibility of the research journal provided me with an organised space and point of reference in which information could be recorded, and could function as an *aide-memoire* and feedback during the different phases of the fieldwork (*ibid.*, p.19). The second advantage of the research journal as an instrument for qualitative inquiry lies in the multiplicity of ‘research material’ which is recorded in it. Holly argues that “keeping a diary is both an aid to memory and a process of generating new perspectives and making connections” (2005, p.28), while Altricher *et al.* distinguish between two general categories for diary notes:

On the one hand diaries can contain data which are obtained by participatory observation and by conversations and interviews in the field, sometimes enriched by explanatory comments and photographs; on the other hand, they can contain written reflections on research methods and you own role as researcher [...]. In addition ideas and insights are noted, which can lead to the development of the theoretical constructs which, in turn can be used to interpret the data. (Altricher *et al.*, 2000, p.12)

In this context, my research diary includes various categories of data, from chronological reports to impressionistic material and pictures. In particular, it contains: structured and unstructured notes obtained by observations; interviews and informal conversations; additional ‘found items’ such as photographs, letters, other formal and informal papers and so on; contextual information about the ways in which data are collected; and reflections both on the educational and the research process, as well as ideas for possible plans or subsequent actions. In other words, it includes “items of different type and quality, both ‘data’ and pieces of reflection, interpretation, and analysis and short memos or occasional observations” linked with interpretive ideas and reflection about research items (Altricher, 2005, p.24).

Acknowledging the importance of making clear distinctions between descriptive and interpretive notes (Bogdan and Biklen 1982 in Altricher *et al.*, 2000, p.20), as well as the essentiality of interpreting from the ground instead of imposing assumptions on the content of data, the organisation of the diary attempted to keep this interaction alive while making clear distinctions between descriptive and interpretive notes. As such, the diary was organised chronologically, and each entry consisted of a descriptive account that was accompanied by an interpretive consideration of the described event.

Descriptive Accounts (DA)

All the descriptive entries were written chronologically as soon as possible after the events, conversations, or other significant moments of the fieldwork. Each entry was accompanied by the date of the event, by contextual information such as time, location, participants, specific foci, etc. Furthermore, paragraphs, headings, subheadings and underlinings facilitated the overall structure of the text (Altricher *et al.*, 2000, p.14). Where an extended description is not possible (such as just after the event) key words or phrases that later functioned as *aides-memoire* were quickly recorded, during the course of the activity (*ibid.*, p.19). Immediately after each lesson, I spent some time writing a more detailed description, in order to make the entries as complete as possible, and anything that I remembered after this was also added (*ibid.*).

Reflective Accounts (RA)

After the end of each session, and before the planning of the following lesson, all the notes were read and reread in order to provide me with new insights, perspectives and/or transformed interpretations with regard to the occurring and recurring events. In other words, writing the research diary functioned as an additional reflective stimulus that helped me to activate reflective thinking concerning the various incidents or sayings

that emerged, as well as about my own action in the field (Janestick, 1999). Altricher *et al.* argue that

[o]n rereading, it is much easier to judge which things are important, and which are not so important, than it is at the time of writing. You may also discover new relationships between ideas, and often some new insights which should be followed up. Open questions emerge and it is easy to see how the thoughts expressed in the text could be usefully restructured. (2000, p.21)

In the same line of reasoning, Holly analyses that

[w]riting enables the researcher to gain distance from an experience, to reconstruct and re-evaluate it from alternative points of view. What is my logic here? What isn't here? What is more obviously interpretations and what would other observers see as factual accounting? The issue is less interpretations than consciousness of interpretation. (2005, p.29)

In this context, the research journal was the method that I used to contemplate what had happened and how it should be interpreted. Often, I wrote down more than one way to narrate an event, systematically interrogated my own actions – for instance, “Was this response right? How I should have reacted better?” – or noted other possible responses.

Interpretive Accounts (IA)

After describing and reflecting on units of data, an initial interpretive phase followed each lesson and was also recorded in the diary. The interpretive sequences contained theoretical, methodological and planning notes. Theoretical notes (NT) aimed to connect specific elements of the data to research questions and to the key theoretical concepts that have been constructive to the entire study. Methodological notes (MT) considered methodological issues, attempting to reflect on the appropriateness of the methods, on the sufficiency of results, or on alternative methodological pathways.

Finally, planning and re-planning notes (PN) emerged from the previous phases of reflection and interpretation of data. The re-reading of my material as well as its organisation according to the themes of the study and the methodological framework of the research, enable me to re-plan activities and refocus on new issues and meanings that emerged from the data.

Process-folios

Alongside my own diary, students were encouraged to keep their own notes with regards to the process, either individually or in pairs, as was suggested by a student in the first school of the fieldwork (male student, 24/2/2009) –. However, the process-folio as a research method proved to be ‘unpopular’ for the students, and hence, less effective for the evolution of the project than I initially hoped. The idea of the process-folio was first introduced by Gardner who, influenced by the idea of the traditional portfolio of the artist, suggests an educational process-folio that focuses on the learning process (instead of product) on students’ perceptions and on their responses to the learning process. More particularly, Gardner analyses that

our process-folios represent an effort to capture the steps and phases through which students pass in the course of developing a project, product, or work of art. A complete student process-folio contains initial brainstorming ideas, early drafts, and first critiques; journal entries on “pivotal moments” when ideas jelled; collections of works by others that provided influential or suggestive, in a positive or a negative sense; interim and final drafts; self-critiques and critiques by peers[.] (1995, p.240)

He also proposes other materials, elements or thoughts that students might consider useful or meaningful for the process, and for themselves.

In my project, I use process-folio as a method of gathering and interpreting data that is designed to involve participants by encouraging them to observe, comment, and reflect on what is happening, and therefore to share both responsibility for and ownership of the process.

3.5.1.1 Limitations

However, the process-folio did not acquire the potential of involving participants either in the first school or in the second. The reasons for this generally differ between the schools, though they have some limitations in common. It can be argued that the common limitation lies in the fact that the process-folio requires a longer period of time than the duration of this project, for participants to make sense of its possible uses, as well as to be engaged enough to develop initiatives with respect to themes that the process generates (Gardner, 1995). More specifically, in order for participants to be able to bring material from their own lives to the process, they need time to get used to this reasoning. In both schools, it was time consuming for students to understand how they could use their process-folios. In both schools, during the first three lessons, I needed to demonstrate to students the ways in which I used my diary in order to facilitate their own understanding. At the same time, students' engagement – in order to be expressed in their process-folios – required longer than five lessons. A second common limitation concerns my own pedagogy, and results from the fact that I did not indicate specific tasks to be completed in the process-folios. Students were free to use their process-folios as much as they wanted without always being instructed on the way in which they should use it. As a result, whenever students had a specific task to complete in the process folios, and they were given time *within* the lesson, participation increased. By contrast, when they were expected to use it more freely, participation decreased. Furthermore, in the case of the first school, the students felt insecure about keeping their

own process-folios (24/2/2009; 3/3/2009). As such, students suggested maintaining a process-folio in pairs, in order to “have a second opinion and be more sure for the result ...” (male student, 24/2/2009). Although we agreed the common use of the process folio, and students were encouraged to use it independently from the ‘result’ of this use, the use of the process-folios remained limited.

Finally, in the case of the second school, students reacted negatively to the idea of a process-folio – specifically, to the idea of a ‘notebook’ in an arts module (See chapter four, school B). As such, the majority of the students did not bring their process-folios to our workshops; nor did they complete the tasks that were assigned. Indeed, only some students from the fine arts-direction, who were obviously more familiar with the idea of a portfolio, constituted the exception, and had different attitudes towards this method.

3.5.2 Observation

One of the most essential methodological instruments for gathering data during the fieldwork was participant observation. Observation functioned as an initial contact with each educational environment – the overall school setting, the teachers and the students. Subsequently, in further stages of the fieldwork, observation constituted a core method for gathering data regarding the thematic categories (codes) of the research. Observation has its methodological origins in ethnography; it is also latterly encountered in sociological research tradition (Paterson *et al.*, 2003, p.30). In the recent methodological framework, it constitutes one of the most, if not the most, popular methods in the social and educational sciences, especially in qualitative research contexts (Argrosino, 2005, p.729). The main reason that observation was employed in this project lies in the potential it offers for the researcher to “capture human behavior in its broad natural context” (Paterson *et al.*, 2003, p.30), and therefore to provide a holistic

view for the interrelationships of various factors that determine the educational and theatrical processes (Morrison, 1993).

The participatory dimensions that characterise some research observations are viewed as an opportunity for the researcher to watch from the inside the various complex dimensions of real world situations (Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003, p.117). The idea of participant observation exonerates the researcher from the positivistic illusion of the objective reality and indicates the necessity of accepting “that observation will always be partial and positioned, produced through interested discourses” (Gallagher, 2006, p.70). From this perspective, observation becomes a matter of “perspective” and “of interpersonal interaction rather than a matter of objective hypothesis testing” (Gallagher, 2006, p.70; Agrosino, 2005, p.736).

Apart from the advantage of ‘experienced’ data, it can be argued that participant observation has the potential to enable the researcher to gain contact with ‘sub-textual’, unconscious or suppressed elements of the human behaviour, beyond individuals’ speech and explicitly articulated choices of action (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.396).

Hammersley argues that

to rely on what people say about what they believe and do, without also observing what they do, is to neglect the complex relationship between attitudes and behavior. (1990, p.597 in Paterson *et al.*, p.30)

Along the same lines, Robson claims that what people do may differ from what they say they do, and observation could function as a way of exploring subjects that participants might not freely talk about in an interview – subjects that they might not consider relevant, or that are not clearly articulated in participants’ consciousness (2003, p.310 cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.396). From this perspective, educational settings, practices

and interactions are more deeply explored and, hopefully, interpreted more insightfully. It is argued that apart from official documents, curricula, syllabi and schools' regulations, case study methodology indicated that there is a wide range of social elements that can be proved determinant – or, at least, influential – for the educational process (Simons, 2009). In this context, I conducted participant observation not only to gather information about the research questions of my study, but also to experience the 'situatedness' of each context, and use this experience as a resource for re-planning.

In the first school, the first participant observation took place in the context of a drama lesson that was conducted by a teacher in the school, while in the next participant observations; I was observing students' responses to the practices of the project. In the second school, where the project took place in the *Ancient Greek Poetry and Literature* module, and where there was no opportunity for initial observation all the participant observations were conducted in the context of my research project.

The participant observations I conducted were semi-structured, rather than highly structured or completely unstructured. A structured observation contains a completed and predefined full agenda of its hypotheses, and uses its data to confirm or refute these hypotheses (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.397).

A semi-structured observation will have an agenda of issues but will gather data to illuminate these issues but in a far less-predetermined or systematic manner. (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.397).

Finally, a completely unstructured observation decides which themes are significant for the research, after observing the situation. After consideration of types of observational method presented above, the participant observation I conducted in the fieldwork can be classified as semi-structured observation. In this context, the structure of my observational focus was both on participants' responses to pre-existing codes, and their

respective indicators, as well as on the ‘inspection’ or emergence of new thematic categories that either characterised students’ reality, or their involvement in the process, or both.

Point to Consider

A range of criticism of observational studies focused on the lack of “standards of objective scholarship” (Angrosino, 2005, p.730) and on the “subjective, biased, impressionistic, idiosyncratic and lacking in the precise quantitative measures” for data collection and analysis (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.407). Acknowledging this discourse regarding the subjective character that observational data entail, I would like to invoke the significance of a study’s epistemology. These questions cannot be viewed independently from what is considered knowledge in each study. Somekh argues that “what is observed is ontologically determined, and dependent on how the observer conceptualises the world” (2004, p.138). From this perspective, it can be argued that “in effect, objective truth about a society or culture cannot be established because there are inevitably going to be conflicting versions of what happened” (Angrossino, 2005, p.731). Therefore,

[T]he record of the observation becomes, necessarily, a product of choices about what to observe and what to record, made either at the time of the observation in response to impressions or in advance of the observation in an attempt prospectively to impose some order on the data. (Somekh, 2004, p.138).

For this reason, the different units of data that emerged through observation were legitimate, valid data, and were included in the final analysis text only after recurrence and verification from other methods of data collections. This means that the inferences from an observational unit of data must be verified from other units of observational

data as well as from participants' viewpoints expressed either during the lessons or in their interviews. Whenever the data were contradictory, "multiple, even contradictory voices" were cited in the text of the analysis of data in order for different interpretations to surround the described events and their possible meanings (Angrossino, 2005, p.731). In this way, any possible challenges to my observations – from participants' opinions to critical incidents or isolated behaviours – are also provided in the final narrative of each case.

3.5.3 Interview

Generally, interview in social sciences research can be viewed as "conversation with a purpose" (Burgess, 1984, p.102 cited in Mason, 2002, p.225). More precisely, it can be argued that research interview "is a prepared opportunity to elicit the views of interviewee and the explanations of why these views about the topic are held" (MacIntyre, 2000, p.86). Despite the breadth of the first approach and the precision of the second, both definitions focus on the communicative character of the method. As Mason analyses, interview, as a research instrument, has its theoretical and epistemological roots in traditions which "assume or emphasize the centrality of talk and text in our ways of knowing about the social world" (2002, p.225). It is argued that this communicative quality provides the interviewees with the opportunity to express analytically their opinions, ideas or feelings, and renders interview a useful method that gives access to the ways in which participants make sense of their own experiences. Therefore, being interested in the ways in which participants experienced the process, as well as in the meanings that they constructed with regards to their experiences, the interviews were conducted at the end of the lessons.

Focus Groups and Groups' Interviews

Aiming to engage as many participants as possible in the final narration of the story, all the interviews aspired to maintain the communicative process of the project and to encourage participants to create their own narratives and dialogues with regards to their common experience. It is argued that one of the main advantages of interviewing individuals in groups lies in its closeness “to the real-life situations where people discuss, formulate and modify their views and make sense of their experiences as in peer groups” (Barbour and Schostak, 2005, p.43). Furthermore, it is argued that the proximity of group interviews with everyday life situations of communication enables them to “take on a life of their own” (*ibid.*), and therefore to incorporate elements of the spontaneity and the authenticity that human communication entails in natural settings. From this perspective, group interviews with participants were conducted in order to provide students with the opportunity to discuss among themselves, and raise issues that in a more formal interview could not be as freely discussed. An additional advantage of group interviews is that they provide an opportunity for students “who vary in their social resources”, and probably in their opinions and perceptions concerning the same issue, to develop a discussion or a conversation that will provide data with multiperspectival dimensions. Gerson and Horowitz argue that issues under analysis are significantly enriched through an inclusive and divergent group:

After focusing on a set of social experiences as they are embodied in cohort membership, the challenge is to choose a sample that can expose how different social locations (such as gender, race and class position) pose different dilemmas, offer unequal resources, and create divergent opinions. (2002, p.205).

Finally, it can be argued that a third significant advantage of group interviews lies in the ‘communicative space’ it opens among participants, and in the possibility it provides to

the interviewer of adopting the role of listener, and hence to have a more discreet position during the process. Similar to the pedagogy of the ensemble theatre that ‘uncrowns’ the power of the teacher/expert and provides a public space to the members to distribute the power among themselves, group interviews place the emphasis on the group of students rather on the interviewer’s dominance.

Apart from the communicative character of the interviews that I conducted during the fieldwork, openness and flexibility were also structural features of these interviews. Avoiding a strictly fixed planning and a completely unprepared conversation, the interviews’ structure specified certain topics to be discussed, while also leaving room for students’ ideas and perceptions to be discussed and developed. This form of interviewing is often defined as ‘semi-structured’, and its schedule might include the topic that will be discussed, specific possible questions for each topic and/or issues within each topic to be discussed (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.361).

One main advantage of a semi-structured interview lies in its potential to involve participants’ interests, concerns, perceptions or questions. Walford underlines that “interviewers and interviewees co-construct the interview” (2001, p.90 cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.350), while Cohen *et al.* analyse that

[t]he interview is a social encounter, not simply a site for information exchange, and researchers would be well advised to keep this in the foreground of their minds when conducting an interview. (2007, p.350)

Conducting an interview with a flexible structure provides potential for unexpected subjects to emerge, for new content to determine the evolution of the process, and for participants to co-construct the outcomes and the inferences of their discussions. Based on the concepts of active citizenship and communicative action, this kind of interview

targets knowledge that is a “co-production dependent upon combined efforts” (Mason, 2002, p.227). In this context, inviting interviewees to co-construct the interview’s main themes, to co-decide ‘what matters’ and to be actively engaged in the construction of knowledge, significantly contributes to the dialogic construction of the findings.

3.5.4 Video-recording

In the initial design of this research project, video-recording constituted a method of paramount importance to supplement my participant-observation; it was to facilitate my access to the exact words and actions of participants (Patterson *et al.*, 2003). The video-recording was essential to my research project for two main reasons. First, the video-recorded units of data are highly important in the context of educational theatre, due to its performative character. Second, in order for me to analyse the content of students’ words and actions, I required a method that could provide me with an accurate account of what was happening. In addition, video-recording gave me the opportunity to review and re-interpret details of the fieldwork’s complex situations retrospectively (Patterson *et al.*, 2003, p.32).

However, this method was completely restricted in the context of the first school and partially in the second. In the case of the first school, although all the students agreed to be video-recorded, and the majority of them were willing to bring their own cameras to record moments of the process, the director of the school denied the use of cameras because it was against the regulations of the school. In the second school, three students initially refused to be video-recorded, but after the third or fourth lesson they changed their minds and suggested that I use the camera. For this reason, in the first school the camera was completely replaced by audio-recording, while in the second school, the first two lessons were audio-recorded but the rest were video-recorded.

3.6 Critical Friend

In both schools I considered it essential to invite the teachers of the lessons to become involved in the process of the research, as well as to invite other drama educators who might be interested in the subject of this study to participate critically in the fieldwork. The reasons for which I insisted to invite critical friends are correlated to multiperspectivity and validity. Due to the fact that I was involved as a practitioner and research in this project, I considered it essential to avoid one-dimensional approaches to the particularities of the contexts and the interpretations of the generated data (Foulger, 2010, p.140). In this respect, the critical reflections of another drama practitioner could bring “opportunities for connections to be made and innovations to be explored” (*ibid.*, p.138).

In the first school, the director would not permit the participation of an external drama teacher. Fortunately, in the second school both the director and the students accepted the participation of another drama educator in our project. This ‘critical friend’ was informed, before the beginning of the fieldwork, about the aims of this study, its theoretical origins, its particular questions and aspirations. During the fieldwork, she was provided with the codes and their indicators, while she was also invited to make her own suggestions with regards to the pre-existing codes and the codes that emerged from the ground. After each lesson, we had a brief conversation in which she provided me with her own observation sheet and explained the reasoning behind her observations. Moreover, during this meeting, I had the opportunity to ask her opinion on critical events or about units of data that seemed controversial to me.

Appreciating the ensemble process of this project, the teacher of the *Ancient Greek Grammatology* gradually participated in the evolution of the process, both in terms of gathering data and in terms of data interpretation. In this context, she also

applied procedures of our lesson to the teaching of the *Ancient Greek Grammarology* Model. As will also be analysed in the data analysis chapter, her participation increased the potential of this project as well as its communicative validity. Finally, in the same school's context, the overall project was observed and evaluated through a questionnaire by Mr. Nikos Govas (See appendix one).

3.6.1 Limitations

The participation of the philologist and of Mr. Govas can be considered as critical friendship within the fieldwork because their involvement was not systematic and their contribution was partial/fragmentary. Only Miss Iro Potamoussi was informed from the very beginning for the structure, the practices, the aims and the issues of this research project. In the same line of reasoning, she was the only 'contributor' who systematically attended and occasionally video-recorded the process, facilitated the lessons and reflected on the data after each lesson. Her facilitation and insight to the work was invaluable both during the fieldwork as well as in the phase of data analysis. However,

"[T]he critical friend, regardless of status or role, is expected to help the researcher achieve a critical perspective even though this may challenge the normal assumptions underlying the researcher's work" (McNiff, *et al.* 1996, p.85)

From this perspective, it can be argued that her critique/criticism to the process was restricted. Possibly due to her own interest in the project, due to her professional 'solidarity' or even due to our relative professional beliefs for drama and education, the extent was not developed. Nevertheless, her contribution was of paramount importance as a co-observant, as an interpreter of key moments and co-facilitator in the lesson.

3.7 Research Ethics

All the aforementioned methods for gathering and analysing data, as well as the overall conception and realisation of educational research, must be, in parallel, viewed and considered from an ethical perspective. Although the issue of ethics in sciences has been initially and officially addressed in the biomedical research context, “increased public recognition of the value of social research has been accompanied by heightened sensitivity to the obligation to conduct social science responsibly” (Fisher and Anushko, 2008, p.95). After the 1960s, social research started to develop its own regulations and guidelines to address the complex ethical issues that inevitably emerge from human interaction (Guilemin and Gillam, 2004). This ethical anticipation becomes particularly urgent from the very starting point of an educational inquiry which involves and asks “people to take part in, or undergo, procedures that they have not actively sought out or requested” (*ibid.*, p.271).

Overall, there are two main categories in which educational research ethics can be classified (*ibid.*, p.262). In the first category, there is a range of traditional key concepts associated with conducting ethical social research, such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. These ethical codes are widely examined by increasing publications of ethical principles and guidelines by professional organisations, institutionalised ethical committees and a relevant bibliography (Piper and Simons, 2005, p.56). In the second category, one could classify ethical issues that arise from the particularities of the social and political situations in which we conduct research, and are related to the multiple factors of human interaction (*ibid.*). This second category of ethics is broadly known as “situated” (*ibid.*) because of the direct and integral relation they have to a specific educational context.

According to The Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2004) all educational research should be conducted within an ethical framework that respects the person, knowledge, quality of educational research, academic freedom and democratic values. Although these factors are separately referred to in the guidelines of the (British) association, it can be argued that each of them might function as a prerequisite for the others or as beneficial to each other. For example, one could not easily conduct an inquiry that seeks to respect knowledge while violating personal rights or democratic values. One might doubt the kind of ‘knowledge’ that would be produced under physical, emotional or intellectual pressure. Moreover, one could not responsibly claim to have conducted a high standard of quality educational research, unless s/he has considered power relations in the process of knowledge construction. In this context, there is a range of steps that I followed in order to respect the ethical issues that emerge from an educational context and that could, in turn, be viewed as inextricable elements of a project’s validity.

3.7.1 Procedural ethics

Informed consent was requested from all the individuals who will be involved in the process. This constitutes an ethical principle of paramount importance because it lies in subjects’ right to freedom and self-determination (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.52). Informed consent entails that every single individual, not simply the major keeper in an institution or project (Piper and Simons, 2005, p.56), was precisely informed about the purposes, the procedures and the consequences of the project and voluntarily decided to be involved (Christians, 2005, p.144; Piper and Simons, 2005, p.56). Clarity and transparency are two particularly important concepts for achieving truly informed consent and both pervaded the quality of this negotiation. In order for the individuals to give informed consent they must truly understand the conceptual and procedural

frameworks of this inquiry, as well as have access to its constitutive concepts. In the same line of reasoning, and following Grant's, Nelson's and Mitchell's suggestion, I communicated my concerns regarding the entire fieldwork, and my expectations regarding individuals' participation to the process, to encourage them to be involved in different stages of the process (2008, p.591). Through this approach I aim to make this inquiry a transparent process for the participants and to present them with all the relevant parameters for an essentially informed consent.

Despite the analytical information that was given to participants, "it is often difficult to ensure fully informed consent at the start of a project because researchers may not be able to anticipate the full extent of information that will emerge" (Haverkamp, 2005 cited in Fisher and Ausho, 2008, p.100). This possibility becomes almost a certainty in an action research framework in which the cyclical process of planning, acting and reflecting is expected to bring reconsiderations and changes or to provoke completely new perspectives to the primal conception of the project. For this reason, a "mutually negotiated re-consent procedure" (Fisher and Anusho, 2008, p.100) or a "rolling informed consent" (Piper and Simons, 2005, p.56) was provided to participants in order for them to have the opportunity to think or rethink their involvement in new activities or procedures in which they were required to take part. In this line of reasoning, participants had the right to withdraw freely at any stage of the research process.

Apart from the voluntary informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and, when required, anonymity, were guaranteed to the research participants, as they are still considered core principles for the conduct of an ethical inquiry (Zeni, 2009, p.258). Participants knew from the beginning that this project is part of my PhD thesis and that the notes from the observations, the interviews and the educational process, as well as

video-recordings, will be considered only by the critical friend who will actively take part in the fieldwork and therefore have personal communication with the students. In addition, participants were informed that elements of the data will be shared with my supervisor and with the examiners' committee. Moreover, they were informed that parts of this study might be further published anonymously in scientific journals or books. In this context, participants themselves decided whether they would give me permission to refer directly to them or if the data would be published anonymously (BERA, 2004, p.24). The reason why I did not decide to make the process anonymous myself consists of an acknowledgement that "anonymity may violate another ethical principle: credit for intellectual property" (Anderson, 1998, cited in Zeni, 2009, p.258). "Anonymization is a procedure to offer some protection of privacy and confidentiality" (Piper and Simons, 2005, p.57). However, there might be teachers, students or other participants that would like to be mentioned for their participation and achievement in the entire process. Participants were also guaranteed to have the right to access data gathered during fieldwork, after its completion and to all the publications that will be related to their work.

3.7.2 Situated Ethics

Situated ethics, in summary, acknowledges the uniqueness and complexity of each situation and any ethical decision needs to take cognizance of the precise way in which many of the above factors are played out in the specific socio-political context. (Piper and Simons, 2005, p.58)

The term 'situated ethics' is broadly used for the "day-to-day ethical issues that arise in the doing of research" (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p.264). There are also other definitions such as "ethics in practice" that also refer to the same ethical issues which are specific and distinctive to each educational context (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004,

p.262). The crucial challenge that situated ethics present lies in their uniqueness and their unpredictability. In other words, there are risks that exist in the fact that emerging, situated issues are neither usually addressed by ethics guidelines, nor are they events widely anticipated by bibliographical references. In the context of these “ethically important moments” (*ibid.*), each researcher might be professionally prepared to reciprocate or correspond to these crucial moments or dilemmas. For this reason, I organised an ethical ‘safety net’ for unexpected ethical issues that might arise during the fieldwork.

In the first place, as Guilemin and Gillan suggest, it is important for research to find and reflect on the connections between the specific advice that guidelines provide and their conceptual and ethical frameworks. It has been argued, and it can still be claimed, that procedural ethics do not always adequately provide solutions to the everyday practices of research (Daly, 1996 p.xvii cited in Guilemin and Gillam, 2004, p.269). However, this distance between procedural and situated ethics might not be as great as it first appears. Respect for the person, the profession and the public are three fundamental concerns that frame different guidelines that accompany various qualitative research projects (Soltis, 1990 cited in Piper and Simons, 2005, p.58). In this context, professional concern about respecting participants and educational practices – as well as a fundamental preoccupation with collaborating with others in order to create common knowledge and alternative practices – might be viewed as a constant ethical basis that frames the researcher’s state of mind and, therefore, their practical response to each ethical challenge (Guilemin and Gillam, 2004).

The next constructive research instrument that functioned as essentially beneficial to the emerging ethical issues is inextricably connected with action research; it constitutes a core conceptual and practical framework for my entire inquiry.

Reflection, as analysed in the epistemological framework of this study (see page..), was proved significant as an ethical practice and, possibly, as a solution during the fieldwork (Guilemin and Gillam 2004). In an initial phase, was based on the suggestion that reflexivity can not only be used as a method of reflection on issues of quality and validity, but that it can also be viewed as a bridge between procedural ethics and everyday practice (*ibid.*, p.273). The concept of reflexivity is widely known in the world of qualitative social research as a process to reflect on and question the ‘produced’ knowledge claims, to recognize limitations and hence safeguard validity (Guilemin and Gillam, 2004). However, Guilemin and Gillam state that their notion of reflexivity “urges researchers to be reflexive in relation to interpersonal and ethical aspects of research practice, not just the epistemological aspects of rigorous research” (*ibid.*, p.277).

Along similar lines of reasoning, I sought to use the practice of critical reflection, in order to locate and identify ethical dilemmas or other ethical issues that could have ambiguous interpretations, or could be multiply perceived. Moreover, as the principles and ‘techniques’ of action research suggest, each precedent session was reflected in terms of the ethical parameters that each interaction or event entailed. Similarly, I sought to adopt a critical reflective stance *in* action as a tool for ethical alertness and in order to record and address ethically sensitive or important moments.

3.8 Data Analysis

3.8.1 Case Analysis

Each case will be separately analysed in an interpretive narrative/story that aims to ‘transfer’ to the reader the overall process that was experienced in each school. Each interpretive story will be analysed both chronologically and topically, in order to tell the

whole story of the evolution, development and experience of the process (Simons, 2009, p.147). The first part of each case's analysis, until the initial overall re-planning, is chronologically narrated. The second section aims to disclose the function of the project in each classroom. In this section the data are analysed according to themes which were either identified at the outset on the basis of the theoretical review, or subsequently generated during the fieldwork.

Taking into account that “the reports we write cannot capture the reality as lived (and in this sense they are historical)” (*ibid.*, p.24), I aimed to construct a story which reveals the evolution of the ‘interaction’ of the ensemble-based theatre model with the group of students. Therefore, the focus was more on the ways in which students experienced the ensemble-based theatre process and the reasons for their responses, rather than on testing the ‘success’ or the ‘failure’ of an exclusively fixed model. In this context, each case story emphasises the timing of the process, the inferences for students’ theatrical and political backgrounds, the re-planning that material conditions necessitated, as well as on further interaction of students with the new learning and theatre making practices and dialogues.

Acknowledging the limitations of attempting to transfer a holistic experience to a written story that is “evidence-led” (*ibid.*, p.21), the final report aims to be transparent. For this reason, each interpretive narrative aims to disclose “the partial nature of interpretations and the conditions of their constructions, so readers can make their own judgments about their relevance and significance” (*ibid.*, p.24). Therefore, I provide descriptions of different units of data – from critical instances to students’ improvisations – that led me to the specific interpretations or inferences (*ibid.*, p.141).

3.8.2 Cross-Case Analysis

At the end of the study, after the holistic description and analysis of each single case, a recapitulating cross-case discussion compares the inferences that were made from the fieldwork in the two classrooms. This discussion will be structured both according to the themes that were identified from the outset of the study, and to the issues that emerged in each case (Simons, 2009, p.148). Nevertheless, it must be noted that whereas the full study might include a comparative, final discussion of the findings of the two cases, the basic priority “remains the distinct cases and the credibility of the overall findings will depend on the quality of the individual case studies” (Patton, 2002, p. 449). As Stake argues, “case study research is not sampling research”: the first priority lies in the function that the ensemble-based model of learning had in each classroom (1995, p.4). This means that there is neither an attempt to generalise nor universalise inferences. The essence of case study lies in the realisation of the interdependence between the practice and the social group. Therefore, the subsequent cross-case discussion attempts to examine the functionality and the limitations of the ensemble-based theatre learning in different social contexts, in order to provoke further thinking and improve future praxis.

3.8.3 Content Analysis

The method I adopted in order to analyse the data is content analysis. Content analysis is an analytic procedure that “can be applied to any message medium (text, spoken word, actions video recordings) to identify what is being communicated” (Newby, 2010, p.484). As Merriam argues “In one sense, all qualitative data analysis is content analysis in that it is the content of interviews, field notes, and documents that is analyzed” (2009, p.205). In this context, all the transcripts from the video- and the audio-recordings, as well as students’ dramatic activity were analysed according to the

main content or themes that they demonstrated. In this process of analysis, recurring patterns and themes were detected in order to enable me to identify the core messages that each unit of data entailed (Patton, 2002, p.463). These messages concerned the ways in which students make sense of the world and the project, respond to its stimuli and participate in it. Core and constituent contents were identified and categorised according to their main messages and themes, and were further interpreted and analysed in order to create new themes on the agenda of the research, or to relate to the pre-existing research framework.

The process of content analysis provided evidence for describing the function that the project has in students' realities. Therefore, it enabled me to detect and interpret students' perspectives and participation to the process, as well as to create relations between my theoretical framework and the practice. At the same time, the content analysis generated new codes which were, in turn, incorporated into the thematic categories of the research.

3.8.4 Coding

The coding process of the data was mainly deductive but it also included inductive procedures (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.65; Patton, 2002). The codes, through which the data were analysed, consisted of both "sensitising concepts" as well as "indigenous" codes that were derived from the fieldwork (2002, p.456-457). This quasi-deductive process of coding was based on the idea of analytic induction. Initially, the process of analytic induction aimed to verify a theory according to its "perfect fit" to the data (Merriam, 2009, p.206). However,

over time, those using analytic induction have eliminated the emphasis on discovering universal causal generalizations and have instead emphasized it as a strategy for engaging in

qualitative inquiry and comparative case analysis that includes examining preconceived hypotheses[.] (Patton, 2002, p.493)

In this context, the analyst starts to examine the data through

theory-derived sensitizing concepts or applying theoretical framework developed by someone else (e.g. ...). After or alongside this deductive analysis, the researcher strives to look at the data afresh for undiscovered patterns and emergent understanding (inductive analysis). (p.454)

Based on this process for coding, I used sensitising concepts that derive from political theory (such as self-institution), from theatre education and ensemble theatre practices (such as ensemble ability and theatre literacy), or from both (such as participation). It must be noted that some of these sensitising concepts, such as **participation**, are transferred intact from theory, while others, such as **ensemble ability**, are based on the theory but their final definition is formulated in the process of explaining and interpreting practice as praxis. As Patton explains, the sensitising concepts do not necessarily derive intact from theory, but provide the analyst with direction and a sense of reference in order to connect theory to his/her practice (2002, p.256). Further, I am providing the codes that this study uses and their indicators when appropriate (i.e., when the code has indicators). In a parenthesis, I will provide the theoretical influence for the construction of each code. Next to the theoretical framework, I will cite the pages in which these theoretical influences are analytically presented in this thesis.

3.8.4.1 Deductive Coding: Sensitising Concepts

- Theatre **curriculum and pedagogy**

Integrated code

Collection code

(Bernstein, see section 2.3.1)

- Students' **political consciousness**

- **Participation**

Word/Dialogue

Action (See section 2.1)

- **Theatre Literacy**

spontaneous and innate uses of theatre

→ towards →

more poetic conventions of performance craft

(students' theatrical literacy/ability will be evaluated according to their progression in the aforesaid model. Further categories of this progression include steps from rules to given circumstances, from signs to symbol and gestus creation, from type to character, from linear narrative to montage and from teacher-facilitation to autonomous dramaturges in groups (Neelands, 2004, pp.22-23)

- **Ensemble ability**

In order to reduce the multiple indicators that are provided by the Excellence and Inclusion Scheme (EIS, 2010)– which provided the main bibliographical reference for the construction of this code – and create a more manageable list of indicators for the needs of this smaller scale research, I draw upon the theoretical framework of this study. Therefore, I use the theoretical concepts that define active citizenship as lenses for this process of indicators' reduction. In this framework, the following categories of indicators emerged. These indicators are based on the EIS, but some of them are re-formulated in order to be more suitable or meaningful in the context of this study.

1. Isonomia and Isegoria:

1.1 All participants are included, regardless of ability, background, cultural and social difference (from 1.5 EIS indicator).

1.2 Students with a range of theatre interests use their distinct strengths to participate, and all of them are legitimate and valued (e.g. acting, writing, stage technology, devised work, musical, directing) (from 1.5 EIS indicator).

2. Communicative Action / Social Skills

2.1 Do participants feel able to interact with others and does all the group work well together, without sub-groups and 'cliques' (from 2.5 EIS indicator)?

2.2 Do participants have effective negotiation and problem solving strategies and skills (from 6.6 EIS indicator)?

2.3 Are participants' suggestions listened to and acted upon (from 2.1 EIS indicator) ?

2.4 Do participants appreciate others' perspectives and allow these to change their own perspective when appropriate (from 6.11 EIS indicator)?

3. Collective consciousness / membership:

3.1 Do participants believe that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (from RSC's ensemble values, EIS, p.10)?

3.2 Do participants put the common interest and good of the group before their own self-interests (from 6.1 EIS indicator)?

3.3 Do participants share and express thoughts and feelings and encourage others to do so (from 6.9 EIS indicator)?

- **Self-institution**

A comment: Whereas the code of **self-institution** could be a sub-code of **ensemble ability**, being the ultimate aim of the ensemble ability, it was coded separately as a thematic category. Nevertheless, its indicators were also based on the IES guide and consist in the following parameters:

1. Do participants feel able to put forwards new ideas and views, and act upon them (from 2.6 EIS indicator)?
2. Do participants discuss how the process is or should be governed (EIS guide, p.15-16)? Do they develop initiative to realise their ideas?

3.8.4.2 Inductive Coding

With regard to the inductive process of coding, indigenous categories – through which participants both made sense of the world (Patton, 2002, p.454), and the “recurring regularities” (patterns) that provide evidence of these categories (*ibid.*, p.465)– were coded in order to inform my analysis, enabling the data to become grounded in the fieldwork (p.453). In order to make this process comprehensive and explicit, I will provide an example of the inductive coding process. In the following example I will provide the transcript and I will describe the action that accompanied it.

Second lesson, School A:

Context of the following dialogue: At the beginning of the second lesson a whole class discussion was held order for participants to remember and discuss how ensemble was defined in the previous lesson. After this discussion, I asked them to think and discuss in pairs possible ways that connect membership in ensemble and citizenship.

Dialogue:

Female student: Maybe ... but ... we are not sure. The ensemble has rules and the citizens have rules. They both have things that they must do.

Myrto: Is it a positive thing or a negative? I did not understand.

Male student (interrupting): The laws.

Male student: Yes, but the citizens are not asked.

Myrto: What does this mean? Who is not asked?

Male student (the one who gave the previous answer): The citizens have to follow the rules but they are not asked.

Myrto: Who indicates these rules in a democratic regime?

Students: [Laugh]

Female student: "Democratic?" [Laugh]

Male student: Where is the democratic regime, Miss, tell me so I can see it?

Myrto: Don't you consider our regime democratic?

Male student: They say that you vote and it's fine but then they do nothing for us. Only for themselves.

Myrto: What we can do for this situation to change?

Female student (the one who gave the initial answer about the rules in the ensemble and in citizenship): Nobody pays attention to us, Miss.

Male student: Things do not change so easily.

Male student: There are a lot who like the situation and, us, only us, we are not enough.

Myrto: Why not?

At this point the reactions varied. Some of them (eight, the majority of whom were male) agreed with their classmates' answers that "there is no real democracy"; others (more than five) did not consider themselves citizens "because I can feel it Miss. I am not so important" (female student); and other students, without providing a specific reason, expressed that they do not feel like citizens, but that they "do not know how to explain it" (female student). Finally, one of the boys raised his hand to say:

Male student: Miss ... can you explain it [citizenship]? ... We are not sure ... We know it. We have done it. But I don't know ... I am not sure I understand it as you mean it.

Recurring content/themes from the dialogue:

1. Citizens: not asked + regime: not democratic.
 2. Nothing for us, no attention to us, us: not enough, me: not so important.
- First phase of coding: identification of patterns: descriptive/open coding
 1. Students believe that there is no democracy or rules applied by others.
 2. Students believe that they are "not enough".
 - Second phase of coding: identifications of themes: interpretive coding
 1. Feelings of injustice.
 2. Feelings of exclusion.

Context for subsequent data that were gathered in the same lesson: The same lesson included three activities of drama, but the pace of the process was slow in an attempt to follow participants' rhythm and enable them to familiarise themselves with the process. The first activity asked students to read an abstract from the dialogue between Antigone and Ismene, to choose a phrase for each heroine and to present it. Only three, out of

twelve pairs, completed the activity. Two pairs started to improvise but stopped while students from other pairs said:

Female students: We don't know what to do, Miss.

Myrto: You can try.

Female student (the same): No Miss, no. I will try the next time.

Myrto (addressing to another couple): Why you do not try?

Male student: We don't know how to do it, anyway.

Male student (the other member of the same pair): I don't want to play the woman. I will play Creon next time.

Myrto: Who wants to try something? And maybe we can inter-complete each other's attempt, like the previous time when you liked it.

Female student: I don't want to show Miss. Really. I don't feel comfortable.

Female student: Miss, help us to show something, because I ... want to do it.

Recurring contents/themes from the discussion:

1. Don't know what to do, don't know how to do, don't feel comfortable, help us to show.
- **First phase of coding:** identification of patterns: descriptive/open coding
 1. Students believe that they "don't know" what to perform.
- **Second phase of coding:** identifications of themes: interpretive coding
 1. Lack of confidence in theatre, or feelings of inability in theatre making.

I constructed a final, third code, of collective “self-perception”, which arose when taking into account the final, interpretive codes of the two units of data which were analysed according to their content (recurring themes). The first unit of data provided information about students’ perceptions of themselves as citizens, while the second unit of data disclosed students’ perceptions of themselves as drama participants.

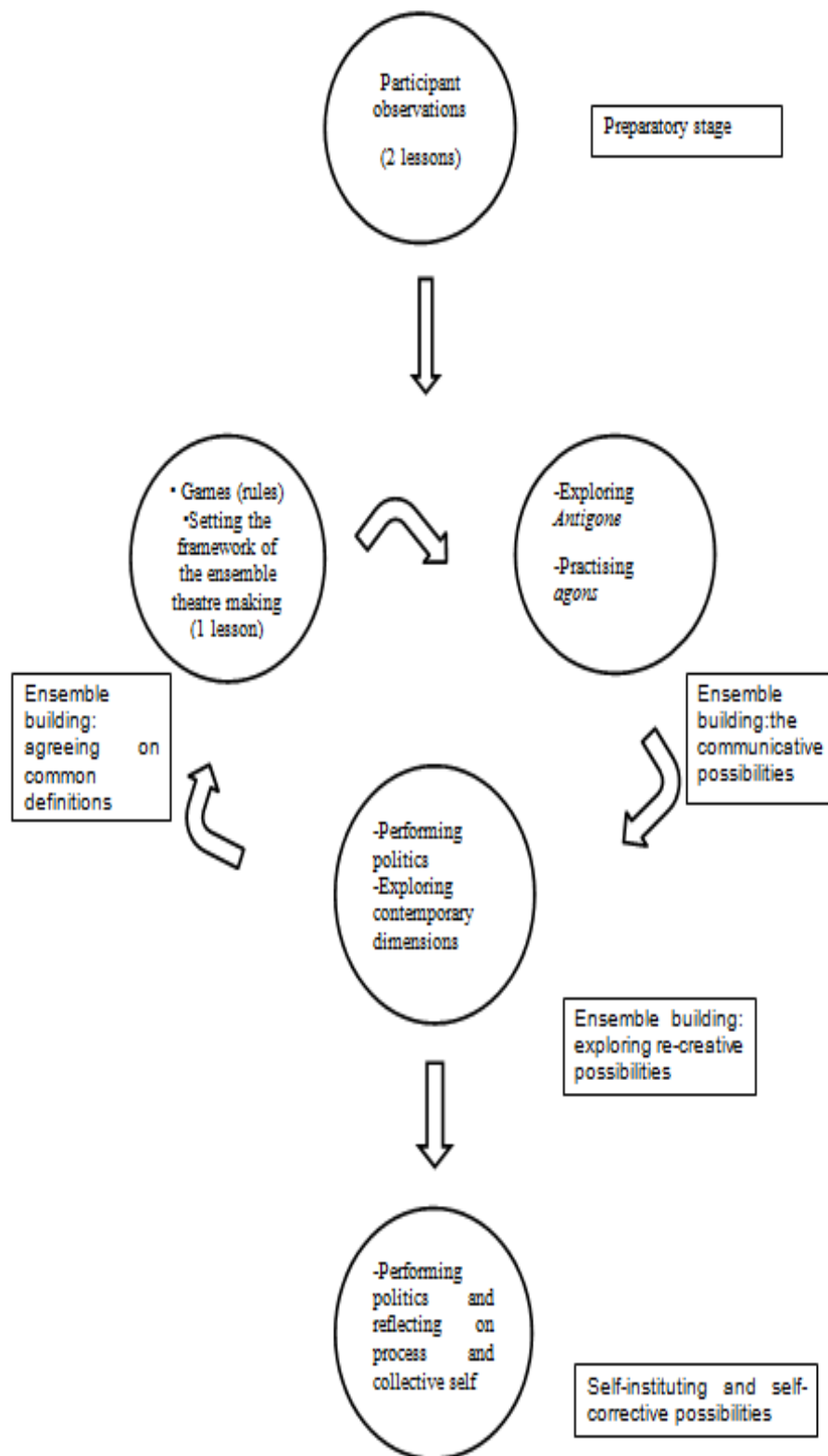


The final code did not remain as **negative self-perception**, because the improvement of participants’ self-perception became a further target of the ensemble-based learning. Therefore, it was renamed as **self-perception** in order to be compatible with the overall analysis of this case, and flexibly adoptable to the different phases of the interpretive narrative of the case of this classroom.

3.9 My own Research Design: initial version

According to the structure of my initial proposal, my own teaching would begin at the third encounter with the students, and would include nine two-hour workshops and a final form of performance that would be presented to the rest of the school.

Figure: The fieldwork as initially planned



The initial structure of my lesson plans anticipated that the first lesson would be introductory and would initiate students, through games, to the principles of the ensemble theatre and to the creation of a social contract, while encourage them to make connections with the concept and the practice of active citizenship as they perceive it. The use of games derives, in the first place, from their extensive use in the field of theatre, both as means of ‘unlocking’ participants’ spontaneity and motivation (Sutton-Smith, 1997), and as points of reference for introducing students to the ‘new knowledge’ and facilitate their passage to the fictional reality of theatre (Bruner, 1974, p.40; Neelands, 1984, p.76). An additional reason (for which games constituted the core of the initial lessons) consists in the rules they entail and the respective value they could have in making explicit to the students the necessity of the self-limiting practices in a social - and, in this case - ensemble enterprise (Sennett, 1977). As the theoretical framework of this study suggests and as the analysis of the Athenian democracy of the fifth century indicates, democratic politics are rendered impossible without self-reflecting and self-limiting practices (See Section 2.2.3, 2.2.5). In a respective ethos, Freire argues that freedom without limits is impossible (1998, p.96). From this perspective, the rules of games could function as a parallel and as a common point of reference for students to realise the necessity and the usefulness of a social contract that can function as a safety network for them to explore and take risks (Winston, 1998).

The rest of the lessons were designed according to the main episodes of Sophocles’ play *Antigone* (442 BC), and each of them was planned in order for the students gradually to explore the meanings of the play through theatrical conventions that were based on collaboration and collective modes of creating. All the lessons were based on the approach that “every drama lesson should be an artistic as well as an educational journey” (Neelands, 2009, p.136). For this reason the *scaffolding* should

equally focus both on the theatrical and on the ensemble development of students (Nicholson, 2002, p.85; Fleming, 2001, p.66).

Each of the lessons included an introduction focusing on the new themes we would explore, while simultaneously encouraging students to make connections to the previous week's lesson. The main structure of each lesson consisted of a sequence of theatrical conventions focusing on different scenes and various issues of the play. As the lessons progressed, the theatrical conventions were designed to be more demanding in terms of students' ability to use theatrical tools, such as symbolism, space, rhythms and movement.

The emphasis on students' ability as actors does not emerge from an "intra-aesthetic" perspective of 'good' performance (Neelands, 2004, p.47); rather, it emerges from an "inter-aesthetic" approach that views theatrical tools as personal and collective resources; these bring about the improvement of students' ability to control meanings through the manipulation of different communicative practices (2004, p.47; Gallagher, 2000, p.48). Gradually, the choice of activities required increased ensemble ability, and students' autonomy as a social and artistic ensemble. At the end of each lesson, reflection was integrated in the process in order for the students to have an organised and systematic opportunity to reflect, evaluate and make suggestions for the next steps of our project.

The final session was designed to include student performances of *Antigone* to the rest of the school, and a collective evaluation of the project. The performance did not aim to be a polished product of systematic rehearsal. Rather, it was meant to function as a source of motivation for political consciousness and expression, and as a common focus for students (Fleming, 2001, p.116). More importantly, it was meant to become a

public forum for students to narrate/present their own perspective of the story, and hence to reshape it through their imagination (Nicholson, 2005, p.19).

3.10 The research design: School A

This proposal did not prosper in either school. Therefore, the above presented, initial, planning was transformed according to the socio-cultural, educational and bureaucratic context of each school.

The first phase of this research project took place in School A in the context of the module *Elements of Theatre*, which is optionally provided in the fourth grade of the Greek Secondary School (the equivalent of year eleven in English secondary education). In the case of School A, due to December's riots (See Section 1.2) and the large amount of school hours that were lost, some of the hours that were officially designed for the *Elements of Theatre* were given over to the core modules of the curriculum that included exams at the end of the year, and were therefore given greater status (Apple and King, 2005 p.99). For this reason the duration of this phase of the research praxis was decreased and included only one participant observation (18/02/2009) and five two school hours theatre workshops (90 minutes) that lasted from the end of February of 2009 (24/02/2009) to the end of March of 2009 (24/03/2009). Hence, instead of nine workshops that were anticipated by the initial design (see section 3.9), the 're-planned' design of this research phase included five meetings with the twenty seven students that constituted the population of this theatre class. The final performance that was anticipated by the initial planning was replaced by a smaller presentation to another classroom of the same grade. Nevertheless, even this smaller performance did not take place due to time restrictions that were indicated by the Director of the school (for further information, See section 4.2.8).

The methods employed for the gathering of data in this school included: process-folios, participant-observation, fieldnotes, and audio-tape recordings of the lessons. I would have preferred to use video-recording, but the school regulations prohibited this. I requested an official document outlining these regulations, but unfortunately was unsuccessful.

3.11 The research design: School B

It is worth noting that School B is an ‘Arts-School’ which, in the context of the Greek education, means that apart from the official curriculum students are offered additional modules that are related to arts education. The arts-curriculum of School B was divided in the directions of theatre, dance and fine-arts. Nevertheless the project and was not accommodated by a drama class, but functioned as an introductory project in the *Greek Language Learning*, and more specifically in the module *Ancient Poetry and Grammarology: Sophocles’ Antigone* (See section 4.3.1). In this school the action research started in the next academic year when the effects of the riots did not influence the practical organisation of school-life. However, time allocated to the project decreased to six instead of nine two school-hours workshops, owing to its incorporation into *Ancient Poetry and Grammarology: Sophocles’ Antigone*²². This means that the school could not provide nine official hours from *Greek Language Learning* for our project owing to the pressure of the official curriculum. Therefore, the overall project in this school lasted for six weeks, from the end of September of 2009 (28/09/2009) to the middle of November of 2009 (16/11/2009). The initial lesson functioned as a first

²² Sophocles’ *Antigone* is a compulsory module of the Greek curriculum and is taught in the fifth grade of the Greek Secondary School (the equivalent of year twelve in English secondary education).

contact with the school because the group because the participant observation was not realized in School B and lasted for forty five minutes (See section 4.3.1, sub-section: Methodological Subversions). Five two school-hours workshops (90 minutes) followed with a fifth grade group of 25 students. After the completion of the workshops, students were invited – voluntarily – to take part in group interviews (See section 3.5.3). Out of the twenty five students of the classroom, twelve students volunteered to participate in the groups' interviews and were, subsequently, divided in three groups of four students.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis

This chapter presents an analysis of a research praxis that took place in two different – but public – schools; this is their only common feature from the outset. As will be analytically examined in this chapter, their differences are several and concern both contextual features and educational practices. These differences determined the evolution of this ensemble-based learning project. The particularities of each case will be examined *within their own contexts* and in relation to the pedagogic actions that emerged within these contexts (Apple, 2005).

The contextualisation of each school will be narratively presented to communicate to the reader the evolution of each process, as well as to provide access: not only to the description of the events, but also to my reasoning as a researcher (Sarbin, 1986 cited in Colombo, 2003). Hence, part of the aim of this analysis is to enable the reader to ‘attend to’ the emerging issues – as and when they were encountered – in their own context, as well as the ways in which the research project was adapted in response to these issues that each unique context generated. In this context, each case will include a contextualisation that will incorporate analysis of data from my initial participant-observations within each classroom or from the initial lessons. These data either informed the re-planning of the following lesson or, in some cases, determined the overall re-planning of the project.

The introductory lessons of the project will be also described and reflected in a similar way because of their equivalent informative function in the re-planning of the following cycle. Whereas the participant-observation of an ordinary school lesson will be informative for students’ relation to drama, the data from the initial lessons, based on the context of *Antigone*, will inform the process concerning students’ **political**

consciousness. In this frame, a second overall – or partial – re-planning will modify the subsequent educational actions of the research. The rest of the lessons will be analysed according to: the impact of the ensemble theatre practices for students' engagement and ability in drama; their ensemble skills; and their self-institution ability. This does not mean that the aforesaid concepts constitute the unique ways of analysing the data, but that they aspire to structure it according to key concepts of the theoretical framework of democracy. At the same time, the interaction of ensemble theatre practices – with the contextual particularities of each group of students – will be examined.

In sum, the collaborative and imaginary processes of ensemble theatre will be viewed in relation to a process of *citizenisation* that was conducted in each school, according to the specific issues that emerged on each case (Tully, 2004, p.99).

4.1 School A

School A is based in Nikaia, a suburb of Peiraias, which is the port of Athens.²³ In this school the subject of theatre (*Elements of Theatre*) was offered as an optional module in the fourth grade and the module was taught by the philologist.²⁴ The official Greek curriculum provides *Elements of Theatre* as an optional module, so not all schools offer it. It is taught only for one hour per week and only in a single grade of the entire secondary school. Even when the module is provided as an option by some schools, it is very rarely taught by a drama/theatre educator, and is instead taught by a philologist, who is viewed as the second most appropriate teacher for Theatre. The reasons for

²³ Nikaia is historically considered a working class area, with its population gradually integrating petit-bourgeois features. The documented history of the area starts at the beginning of the twentieth century. Specifically, it begins after the expulsion and the exchange of population between Turkey and Greece (1922-1924), as Nikaia was one of the regions to accommodate a large number of more than 1,500,000 refugees who arrived in Greece. Until today it remains not particularly developed, and an over-inhabited region of low valued property, with bare communal cultural capital such as cinemas, theatres, museums and other kinds of cultural organisations.

²⁴ Philology is the study of literature and disciplines relevant to literature or to language. The philologist in the Greek Secondary School teaches all the modules that are related to Greek Language (ancient or modern), Latin Grammar and Language and History.

placing the philologist in the position of the drama/theatre educator vary, and are also dependent on the wider organisational structures of the Greek public sector. Greek education suffers, from time to time, both from the state's endeavours to reduce public expenditure, and from a lack of appropriate organisation. Often, schools remain without full teaching staff until the middle of the year, or even until the end of the year, especially in rural regions (*kathimerini*, accessed 17/2/12, *citypress*, accessed 17/2/12). For the majority of the time, the optional modules are those which are often taught by other subjects' teachers – especially when they are taught for just one hour per week.

At the same time, and apart from the overall downgrading practices of public education, *Educational Theatre* does not stand highly in the hierarchy of the Greek curriculum (Eisner, 2005, p.76). Its status heightens only when the module is viewed as symbiotic with Greek language – either modern or ancient – and to European Heritage of classical texts (Fleming, 2001, p.48). Thus, in the context of the Greek curriculum, the module of theatre is characterised by a text-based approach. In fact, the national syllabus for Theatre Education in Greek Secondary School is disappointing:

the familiarization of the student with the play is realized through his exclusive contact with the 'dramatic text', as a philological subject, stripped from its particular value, the theatricality (*National Syllabus*, p.48).

In this context, where *Educational Theatre* is approached either as a subject of secondary priority, or as a derivative of literature, the teaching of the *Elements of Theatre* is given over to one of the philologists of the school. In either of these cases, for the philologist, the passage from the teaching of Greek language to the teaching of theatre does not entail great challenges. It is preferable if the philologist has, at least, a certain interest in theatre, rather than simply being obliged to teach the module.

In the case of School A, for the academic year 2008-2009, the module was taught for forty-five minutes per week (one school hour) and the class consisted of twenty-seven students.

4.1.1 The ‘participant’-observation (18/2/2009)

The first focus of the observation was on teaching practices (**theatre curriculum and pedagogy**). The second focus was on students’ dispositions to the module, and the degree and quality of their **participation**. The third focus was on students’ **theatrical ability/literacy**, which helped me devise appropriate lessons for the needs of the specific group. The final area of focus was on a social level – mainly on students’ **ensemble ability**. The terms of their collaboration, the extent to which they were listening to one another, the way they incorporated each others’ ideas, and their ability to take initiatives, would all help me understand their social interaction. However, having a semi-structured rather than a completely structured observation, I was aiming to record any further particularities or contextual elements – outside the pre-defined foci – that characterised the school environment or the group (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p.408).

Before visiting the classroom, and in conversation with the philologist, I was told that I should not “expect a lot” because the majority of students are not “good students” and that she did not think that they would go to university. She believed that the students’ educational and socio-economic background did not permit an understanding of the value of education; hence they did not “invest” a lot in knowledge. She added that:

The families in this area are not educated. You know. And they have neither the economic nor the cultural resource to value their children’s education and invest in it ... you understand ... don’t you? (Philologist, 18/2/2009)

It is worth noting that her intonation and facial expressions during this conversation did not give me the impression that she blames the students for this; rather that she feels sorry for them. It is also worth noting that I do not categorise this interview as data about the students, but as data about the context of this school. As Lingard argues, this attitude is often encountered in schools where the “pedagogy for success” distorts the educational process by imposing the need for “familial cultural capital” and by reproducing these “class-based inequalities” that derive from this familial capital (2010, p.175).

In the observed session, the students sat at their desks as they would do for a module of literature or mathematics. The practical activity that the lesson provided was a dialogue from *Romeo and Juliet*, which students had to perform in pairs. Two volunteers were asked to stand at the front of the classroom to perform. A pair of students came after three ‘calls’ of the philologist. During the students’ improvisation the philologist corrected students in order that they “improve the acting and make it more theatrical” (philologist, 18/2/2009). The students improvised this dialogue verbally, but so quietly that the rest of their classmates, who were seated at the back, were unable to hear what they were saying. They were standing, ignorant of how to use the space, and they neither incorporated gestures nor body movements. Their quiet voices, lack of body movements and their general hesitation to volunteer for the improvisation, gave me the impression that students did not enjoy this activity and did not feel comfortable being ‘onstage’; they did not know what to do in order to feel more comfortable with the task (DN from the research journal, 18/2/2009).

This kind of ‘**participation**’ in the lesson can be viewed as identical to the way in which students ‘participate’ in mathematics or are examined in history. One or two students stand up in order to solve an exercise on the blackboard, or in order to recite

what they learnt in history, geography or other lessons that require learning by rote. One or two students are examined while the rest of the classroom listens and the teacher marks them. The reluctance of the students to stand up and perform the text reminded me of the reluctance of students when they are asked to stand up and solve exercises in other lessons (RN from the research journal, 18/9/2009)

One reason for their discomfort could be that students were completely unprepared for such an improvisation. They were not given any context to help them understand the abstract, and this isolated activity of acting could provoke such discomfort (Fleming, 2001, pp.56). Other explanations, such as the philologist's interventions (18/2/2009) or my presence, could also reinforce this feeling of discomfort. A further explanation concerned the frequency of the lessons during the school year. Owing to the riots of December 2008 and the riots in schools that followed, I hypothesised that it was possible for students to have missed a lot of lessons or for the philologist to borrow the scheduled 'time' of *Elements of Theatre* in order to replace the lost hours of the ancient Greek or modern Greek modules of the official curriculum, in which students sit exams at the end of the year (IN from the research journal, 18/9/2009). During the rest of the lesson, another pair of students was asked to improvise the remainder of the dialogue, which took place in a similar way.

The overall *modus operandi* of theatre teaching/learning was based on a very restricted sense of participation, both in terms of the construction of knowledge as well as in terms of theatre-making. The entire lesson included only four students in pairs and excluded the rest of the class in a passive spectatorship without any opportunity for contribution, nor any sense of interaction. Each pair who tried to 'perform' the dialogue between Romeo and Juliet was interacting only with the implied 'authenticity' in the corrections of the philologist.

In the last fifteen minutes before the end of the lesson, the philologist invited me to introduce myself and talk to the students about the project. Briefly, I explained to the students the project's subject and its main structure. They had no questions, so, for the remaining time, we discussed the reasons why they chose *Elements of Theatre* as an optional module. I also asked them in pairs to discuss and write down (anonymously) what comes to their minds when they hear the word 'theatre'. Seven students out of twelve who answered the question gave answers such as "sketches" or "theatrical plays" (notes from the fieldwork) while the other five students who replied explained that they chose the lesson because it does not include exams at the end of the year. The rest of the students did not raise their hands to answer this question, and two students to whom I addressed the question said that they "don't know" (notes from the fieldwork).

With regards to the question about what theatre means to them, seven pairs (out of twenty-seven students in the classroom) answered it. The rest of them gave back their process-folios without an answer. In students' answers, the most common responses were

- actor
- performance
- audience
- stage

The notions of "creation", "collaboration" and "expression" appeared only once (for students' papers, see appendix two). It can thus be argued that the words that students wrote as the first thing that came to mind when they heard the word 'theatre' were the "unities of theatre" as they are presented in the chapters of the National Textbook of the Ministry of Education for *Elements of Theatre*. It is possible that those students who did not provide answers did so out of indifference or insecurity, though I believe that lack of

engagement is a more probable reason, especially if we consider that some students only chose theatre because of the lack of final exams (IN from the research journal, 18/2/2009).

A further interpretation was added when, after the end of the lesson, the philologist informed me that the majority of the students had never been to the theatre and that their unique perceptions were restricted to the book of the national curriculum. More specifically, only three students out of twenty-seven have been to a performance (philologist, 18/2/2009; DN from the research journal). I asked the philologist why the school did not arrange a theatre excursion, and she explained that students' parents would not be able to afford such an expense (DN from the research journal, 18/02/2009).

4.1.2 Reflecting on the Data: A Critical Perspective in Theatre Curriculum

Reviewing and reflecting on the data from the first observation and the written answers of the students, put in context alongside the information and estimations offered by their teacher, I constructed the following inferences. In sum, it can be argued that the procedure of drama was “mechanical, involving rote behavior and very little decision making or choice” (Anyon, 1980, p.73). In particular, the subject of theatre, presented in such a technical way, lost some of its educational potential. This includes its social dynamic, its imaginative possibilities, and its transformative power, as well as the impact that all this potential could have on students' realities (Gallagher, 2000; Greene, 2000). All these could not be seen separately from the overall context: none of the students had ever had a theatrical experience in their social, out-of-school life, and thus their sole contact with theatre remained restricted to the above described experience of the classroom. As a result, there was very little and mostly unwilling participation, undeveloped theatrical ability, and non-existent interaction. From all the above, it can be

argued that the overall **theatre curriculum and pedagogy** that was conducted in this school can be classified in the collection code (See section 3.8.4).

As was analysed in the first chapter, the linguist and sociologist Bernstein classifies educational knowledge in codes according to the ideological principles shaping the systems of curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation that frame it. The specific approach, encountered in this school, can be associated with Bernstein's collection code (1977, p.228). This knowledge transmission model of learning, rather than knowledge construction – apart from offering “bits of information that have little significance to conduct life” (Aronowitz, 2009, p.106) – renders the learning process a form of privately acquired capital.

The detachment of school knowledge from everyday life is another corrosive dimension of the collection code. For example, the teaching of theatre in this school, having the “hidden” consent – in Apple's sense (2005) – of the official Syllabus of Theatre Elements, makes a hegemonic hierarchy of theatre knowledge. This is achieved through its exclusive focus on sacred texts and acting. This renders the module not only remote from students' wider interests, but also highly technical and inaccessible for those who do not share in its cultural habitus. A drama educator engaged in a democratic vision for education, observing this lesson, would inevitably recognise that such an approach to drama would fail all the students who are not actors and who do not have the educated “horizons of expectations” to value, or with which to approach the masterpieces of the Classics (Jauss cited in 1982 in Bennett, 1997, p.48). In other words, this lesson, by remaining detached from the experiences of the majority of the students, reinforces the privatisation of knowledge for those who already ‘own’ it. Such stratification of school knowledge is, reasonably, viewed by a range of neo-Marxist or critical educators as a feature of the class stratification of society and as a confirmation

of the role of school as a reproductive institution (Dimitriadis, 2010, p.194; Lingard, 2010; Apple and King, 2005, p.70).

Bourdieu paradigmatically argues about the impossibility of a ‘cultural free’ pedagogic action and the ways in which arbitrary choices are presented as ‘natural’ or ‘universal’ in order to “to reproduce the structure of the distribution of cultural capital” (1977, p.11). Dimitriadis focuses on how the elite art forms marginalise students who do not own the ‘appropriate’ cultural capital that is required for different kinds of success and achievement (2010, p.195).

In this context, it can be argued that this specific educational approach transfers and reproduces, within the educational environment, some of the social practices of exclusion. It does this by depriving students of the opportunity to legitimate their own, vernacular forms of knowledge, and approach theatre through their previous life-experience of play or storytelling, for instance (Hooks, 2009, pp.136-137, Neelands, 1984). As discussed above (See section 2.3), an inclusive and integrated theatre curriculum and pedagogy would make use of students’ vernacular knowledge and personal resources in order: to familiarise them with theatre; to enable them to develop further their own strengths; and to gain a sense of ownership of the learning process (Dickinson, 2006; Kempe, 2000). However, the specific approach to theatre education encountered in this school mitigated students’ participation. Students who were uninterested in theatre were not stimulated. At the same time, students who were initially interested in theatre were suppressed or denied participation, owing to the hegemonic curriculum.

This means that the students who chose the module to do “sketches” did not want to engage in drama. Nor were those students who were indifferent to theatre motivated by the pedagogic stimuli that were employed. The circumvention of the various

“avenues of engagement” restricted students’ access to the module and severely impeded their participation (Winston, 2004, p.21). In turn, a range of skills that are associated with the multimodal participation in drama were also neglected (Winston, 2004). Therefore, it is argued that the specific **theatre curriculum and pedagogy** of the observed theatre lesson impeded the development of students’ **theatrical ability/literacy** through the indirect restriction of **participation**; that is to say, through the limitation of students’ initiative both in terms of word and action. Finally, it can be claimed that in the context of the collection code, where knowledge is viewed as a private property, the collective and collaborative models of learning are essentially discouraged. This approach to drama inhibits any potential for the development of students’ **ensemble ability**, which could not even be observed during this lesson because the chosen pedagogy did not utilise any social dimension of theatre learning.

Taking into account the aforementioned issues, I replaced the initial lesson (See appendix three) with another one that aimed to encourage students to reconsider the concept of theatre (See appendix four). It did so by focusing on a broader and, hopefully, more interesting and more liberating conception of theatre learning. In this context, the structure of the lesson became more inclusive and connected with a variety of cultural identities and theatrical genres (Neelands, 2003, p.19). At the same time, all the activities maintained their collective character in order to have dialogic and liberating potential.

4.1.3 First lesson: redefining theatre (24/2/2009)

In order to make the classroom environment a beautiful and democratic space (Winston, 15/3/2012; Peterson, 2009, p.312), I pushed back the desks and created a circle with chairs, put up posters and photos from various theatre traditions, and positioned four laptops around the classroom that would later be used by different

groups in order to view and discuss some relevant videos I had brought (for the photos, see appendix ten). The Director of the School had already explained to me that they did not have laptops, CD players, paper to make photocopies, or spare pens and pencils, because the school could not afford such expenses (data from the fieldnotes, 18/2/2009). When the students entered, they were very surprised and they reacted positively: comments included “cool” (male student), “look, how many colours [are] in the classroom!” (female student) or “I don’t believe this is our classroom” (female student).

During the most conversational phase of the lesson the majority of the students were engaged in groups and whole-class conversations, which aimed to decode and interpret the images that depicted moments of various theatre performances (See appendix four, activity two). Equally motivated was the students’ **participation** in the observation and interpretation of the video (See appendix four, activity three), as well as in the second phase of the lesson in which we combined the pictures and videos with text abstracts and games of mimesis and assimilation (See appendix four, activity four and five). At the end of the lesson, some of the activities took a more collective and performative character and rendered students “participant-actor” and “participant-audience” in order to interact with each other’s work (Gallagher, 2000, p.69). The first reason for working through these flexible roles – in the process of the ensemble theatre making – lies in the “collective commitment to try out, rehearse, or replay different possibilities” (*ibid.*). The second reason for this pedagogic choice is related to the inclusive and process-character it elicits:

Part of the strength of this kind of collective process is its inclusion of voices and its overt position that there is not just one way to experience a story. It is not clean, fast, or direct movement to a conclusion. It is slow and meandering in its progress. (*ibid.*)

The overall structure and pace of this process aimed to render the drama circle the ‘starting point’ for individuals, pairs or groups to take the initiative to stand up and create with their own speech and act their own meanings from the previously discussed images. The rest of the group had to pay attention to what the actors were trying to do, and every member was encouraged to guess the correct ending of their classmate’s improvisation and complete, performatively, what their classmate had started to create. I made clear that during this process the students should not raise their hands and I would not choose who would participate. The process was open to everyone, as part of the drama circle. The ‘permission’ for participation was given by the previous actor and by students’ belief in their own initiative, that they could complete and improve their endeavour. In this way, I tried to create egalitarian and autonomous modes of participation that did not previously exist. I attempted to render the ensemble circle an *open space* contrasting to the previous conditions of theatre making (Brook, 1990). In a sense, I attempted to interrogate and critique the pre-existing model of theatre learning that rendered the teacher the drama expert by suggesting a model of *isegoria* and *isonomia*, which was realised in the *open space* of the circle.

In this process, twelve students attempted to complete each other’s improvisations, while twenty-two out of twenty-seven had an opinion about the actions that were performed (2.1, 3.3, 4.1). The students were particularly enthusiastic about this renewed contact with theatre, particularly when they realised that they “made it!” (female student, 24/2/2009); they clapped when they viewed the result (See appendix four, activity five). Their enthusiasm increased when I told them that this final activity was representative of the way in which we would continue to work.

An increase in students’ **participation** could be also observed in their process-folios, which were, again, used in pairs, and according to the students’ preference (for

the use of the process-folios, see methodology, section 3.5.1.4). At the end of the lesson, I asked the participants to write down something that they would like to note about the lesson. I suggested that it could be a description about an activity, something that they did not like, something that they liked, an addition to their previous answers about theatre, or even their preferred picture or theatre genre from amongst those that they first encountered in the lesson.

Whereas in the first lesson seven pairs of students provided answers to the question, in this lesson ten pairs of students shared their impressions of the lesson. Within these, three pairs of students chose to describe new images of theatre (See appendix two). Two pairs chose the image which presents a “single actor to be transformed according to his role” (See appendix two). Two other pairs went back to their first answers regarding theatre, and completed the words that came to mind to characterise the art of theatre (See appendix two). Two other pairs noted that they really liked the descriptions both of the images and of “ourselves when standing in positions” (referring to the interpretation of still images) (See appendix two). Two pairs that did not answer the question in the previous lesson now answered that theatre is “transformation + [*sic*] a fantasised world” and “meeting with the innovative and with ourselves” (See appendix two). All these answers evidenced a certain kind of upgraded or more inclusive **theatre literacy/ability**. At the same time they manifested an increased level of **participation**.

A pair of students said that they did not like the circle, while another pair said that they did not like the still images (See appendix two). Evidently, students were still taking advantage of the opportunity to comment on the lesson, despite the fact that they gave a negative response (**participation**). This was part of the aim of this ensemble

process, which was to increase participants' initiative and horizons with regards to what is permitted and legitimated in a 'normal', ordinary lesson.

Finally, the notion to which the students' papers most often referred – and which was not mentioned at all in their previous answers – was that of transformation (**theatre ability/literacy**). Transformation as an innovative concept for the students was also commented on in the reflective conversation we had at the end of the lesson. It was, according to the students, “the most impressive thing that we saw” (male student) as well as the most impressive thing they did. This was because it was “made by ourselves, by our bodies” (female student).

4.1.4 Second Lesson: Perceptions of Citizenship and of Collective Self (3/3/2009)

After reflecting on our previous ensemble work, we tried to create our own social contract for the rest of our collaboration. In order to connect our previous work to the Theban polis and its citizens, I asked students to discuss in pairs and then share with the rest of the group how the ensemble principles, which we had discussed, could be connected with the principles and practices of active citizenship (See appendix five, activity one). In the group discussion, the students needed encouragement to join the conversation:

Myrto: You might think that what you said in pairs is not so relevant, but, in essence, it might be very useful.

Students: [No reply.]

Myrto: Someone must open the conversation.

Female student: Maybe ... but ... we are not sure. The ensemble has rules and the citizens have rules. They both have things that they must do.

Myrto: Is it a positive thing or a negative? I did not understand.

Male student [interrupting]: The laws.

Male student: Yes, but the citizens are not asked.

Myrto: What does this mean? Who is not asked?

Male student [who gave the previous answer]: The citizens have to follow the rules but they are not asked.

Myrto: Who indicates these rules in a democratic regime?

[Students laugh.]

Female student: “Democratic?” [Laughter].

Male student: Where is the democratic regime, Miss? Tell me so I can see it.

I then asked them to explain why they did not consider the Greek regime democratic, and the majority of students agreed that the regime might be officially democratic but in reality only some people rule.

Male student: They say that you vote and it’s fine but then they do nothing for us. Only for themselves.

Myrto: What we can do for this situation to change?

Female student [who gave the initial answer about the rules in the ensemble and in citizenship]: Nobody pays attention to us, Miss.

Male student: Things do not change so easily.

Male student: There are a lot who like the situation and, us, only us, we are not enough.

Myrto: Why not?

At this point the reactions varied. Eight students (the majority of them male) agreed with their classmates that “there is no real democracy”; more than five did not consider themselves citizens “because I can feel it, Miss. I am not so important” (female student); other students, without providing a specific reason, felt that they were not citizens and they “do not know how to explain it” (female student). Finally, one of the boys raised his hand to say:

Miss ... can you explain it [citizenship]? ... We are not sure ... We know it.

We have done it. But I don't know ... I am not sure I understand it as you mean it.

Students' **political consciousness** indicated a particularly negative perception of existing democracy and of their roles within it. Instead of explaining what I meant, or seeking to convince them of their entitlement to citizenship, I considered it appropriate to tell them that they would have the opportunity to explore both citizenship generally, and their right to citizenship throughout the evolution of the research. We left this discussion open in order to return at the end of the lesson, and possibly add new perceptions to the practice or the understanding of citizenship, as we did with theatre.

The activity that followed after this discussion focused on exploring performatively the *prologue* and on *parodos* of the play (See appendix five, activity three).²⁵ Our last activity – in an attempt to re-approach citizenship through a provided context – changed from what was planned. Instead of viewing the position of Creon as the lesson initially anticipated, I asked the students to discuss in groups, as citizens, their opinions about the arguments that were expressed by each heroine in the prologue (See

²⁵ Prologue: the dialogue between Ismene and Antigone; Parodos: the first entrance of the chorus in the *orchestra* which includes the first choral song of drama.

appendix five, activity four); that is, to perform public discussion among citizens concerning the political positions of the two heroines.

The progression of both activities encountered significant difficulties during the lesson. With regards to the first activity, all the groups that attempted to present their work, after spending a lot of time preparing, could not sustain the first improvisation for more than five minutes because they could not develop or improvise the lines they had chosen from the text. The second improvisation, in which they had to comment as citizens on the decisions of the two heroes, was even more “difficult” for the overwhelming majority of the classroom (female student). The majority of the students stopped their presentations because they “did not know what else they could say”.

Students only started to express their opinions, albeit without performing, when I used ‘teacher-in-role’ in order to start the conversation myself as a citizen (See appendix five, activity five). I wanted to learn what happened in the polis and what they personally thought of it. After some of the students expressed their opinions, I created parallelisms between our activity and citizenship practices. It created links between this kind of communication we had, and the ways in which citizens discuss issues of public importance.

4.1.5 Reflecting on Data from the Second Lesson: Emerging Code

After this lesson, it became evident that some of the students not only felt ‘insufficient’ in terms of **theatre ability/literacy**, but also doubted their entitlement to citizenship (**political consciousness**). In this context, another issue was generated by the fieldwork. This issue concerned students’ perception of themselves, both as actors and as citizens. Hence an additional thematic category (code) was added in the interpretive framework of this case study of **self-perception**. This indigenous code was constructed

to re-focus this research project and to examine whether ensemble-based theatre learning could now have an impact on the **self-perception** of the group, since it was obviously annulling any conditions of even seeking the project's initial aims, which presupposed minimal citizen consciousness and artistic action.

The notion of self, in this context, refers to the group, and therefore concerns a collective mode of self-definition. Castoriadis, examining the structures of the Athenian democracy of the fifth century, discusses the self-regulatory, self-judging and self-governing power of the polis. In this context, he analyses how this self is constituted by the political body of the demos – namely, the Athenian citizens (1983, p.274).

4.1.6 An Overall Reflection: Ideology Critique

As has been shown, the school environment denied students a range of practical preconditions of a decent education, ranging from heating to photocopies. At the same time, a range of pedagogic preconditions was also denied through the lack of a range of educational principles that focus essentially on the intellectual and the spiritual development of the students (Hooks, 1994, p.13). It can be further argued not only that the learning process that denied “human capacities for creativity and planning, is degrading” (Anyon, 1980, p.88), but also that this overall educational environment entailed a range of “psychological processes involved in misrecognition” (Wilkinson, 2005 cited in Lister, 2007, p.166). All these factors contribute to and determine “the character and the scope of classroom events” and provide insight to deeper social meanings of what happens in the institutions and social settings (Anyon, 1980, p.87).

In this context, theories of reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977) and of critical pedagogy (Apple *et al.*, 2009), more or less tend to agree with the claim that “there is [an] important difference between the rights which people have in principle and the ones

they have in practice” (Wallace, 2001, p.17). Furthermore, although young people “may have equal rights, they do not necessarily have access to those rights” (*ibid.*, p.15), and that for such a lack of access to these rights “material inequality”, and the socio-political and psychological corollaries of it, do matter (Lister, 2007, p.166).

As a result, even if there was not explicit and formal denial of rights or misrecognition, the lack of respect is often enough to “lead students to a collective distortion of self” (Neelands, 2007, p.310). In *Respect*, Sennett argues that lack of respect, though less aggressive than “outright insult, can take an equally wounding form” because it deprives someone of recognition as “a full human being whose presence matters” (2003, p.3). For young people to feel marginalised, even less explicit forms of misrecognition are enough. It can be argued that, when “rights are not realized”, it is enough for young people to be in a disadvantaged position of which they are aware (Chisholm, 1997, p.108). In this context, the above described notion of **self-perception** of the students, both in terms of educational and socio-political status, can be viewed in parallel to Helve’s research results, which indicate that young people’s world-views are formed neither by chance, nor entirely by choice (cited in Jones, 2001, p.194). Rather, they vary according to young people’s socio-economic, and, therefore, political position in society (*ibid.*). Even if some of the students had not been able to provide a clear definition of citizenship, they had the feeling of being excluded – at least to a certain extent – from this political identity. In other words, they did not make sense of citizenship as a self-evident right. Rather, their attempts to approach the concept ascribed a privileged nuance to the term. Overall, taking into account the regional economic context of this school, the lack of material facilities and the poverty of the stimuli of students’ educational life (from the environment to the teachers’ attitudes as educators, as well as towards the students), it can be argued that the classroom typically

functioned reproductively for the negative self-perception of this group of young students.

Finally, it must be clarified that, in the case of this classroom, there was no cultural or ethnic group-specific identity or any cultural ‘otherness’ which might give rise to certain differences that should be recognised. (Fraser cited in Lister, 2007, p.164). For this reason, there was the need to deal with a kind of misrecognition which, as has been mentioned, denied students “common humanity” (Fraser, 1999, p.38) by overlooking their status as full partners in social interaction (Fraser 2001 in Lister, 2007, p.164; Fraser, 2007, pp.20-21).

4.1.7 An Overall Re-planning

This negative **self-perception** and its impact on **participation** suggests the need for an ensemble-based pedagogy that might problematise the terms of collective self-perception. Additionally, this pedagogy might create conditions that could influence or transform the filters for perceiving the collective self of the group. Through providing different social and artistic lenses for viewing classroom life, perception at least might be altered. In other words, it can be argued that in the context of this school, the perspective from which the **ensemble ability** and the **self-instituting ability** would be targeted, has been mediated by the lenses of recognition and **self-perception**. This means that the egalitarian and inclusive principles of ensemble-based theatre learning would be activated in order to overcome *injustice* in terms of students’ **self-perception**. Nancy Fraser argues that

overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction. (2007, p.20)

The previous conditions of ‘participation’ denied drama participants the possibility of speech and action in the synergy of theatre. This approach to theatre-learning could be challenged by the egalitarian processes of ensemble-based theatre-learning, where everyone ‘is’ and feels entitled to speak and find out her/his own role. The problematisation of the previous classroom ‘regime’ could enable students to reflect and interrogate the ‘institutionalized obstacles’ that impeded them from participating in theatre’s social imaginations. More optimistically, this alternative model of participation could permit students to realise that they are themselves the experts of creating their classroom reality, and therefore they should themselves be equally responsible for making the claims to recognition.

Apart from the conceptual reconsideration of the process, the lessons were re-planned in order to place emphasis on the creation of an open and safe artistic space. This space could creatively accommodate students’ actions and would accept and value students’ contributions. This does not mean that the theatrical apprenticeship would be neglected. I have previously argued that the development of students’ theatrical literacy is viewed as a pre-condition for their autonomy as a learning group (See section 2.3.2), and hence is beneficial to their ensemble self-perception. However, the learning pace of the entire process needed to decelerate; to decrease the number of drama activities that each lesson contained; and to include a wider range of playful activities, which could encourage students to take the ‘risk’ of a less self-‘censoring’ **participation** (Neelands, 2004, p.13). The reason for this decision lay in the necessity of adapting the process to the students’ background **theatre ability/literacy**. An intensive and dense curriculum and a quick pedagogic pace was likely to exclude students by imposing upon them very high standards that could seem unrealistic to achieve. Bruner refers to the “economy” of instruction in order to “domain of knowledge relates to the amount of information that

must be held in mind and processed to achieve comprehension” (1974, p.45). In this context, he explains that

[t]he more items of information one must carry to understand something or deal with a problem, the more successive steps one must take in processing that information to achieve a conclusion, and the less the economy. (*ibid.*)

Therefore, taking into account students’ negative **self-perception** as theatre participants, it was essential to follow a pace that would be feasible and that would encourage them to take the initiative. Throughout the progression of the lesson, a *scaffolding* process was designed in order to offer a progressive model of learning.

Finally, the re-planned lessons would place emphasis on particular activities that would have key functions for students’ familiarisation with the role of citizens, and the process of decision-making in a polis. This process could possibly function as an initial, small step for the construction and the formulation of an upgraded **self-perception**, which could, in turn, enable students to view active citizenship as a more accessible practice and therefore identity for themselves.

4.1.8 The Ensemble Theatre Making Dimensions

In this section, it is shown that ensemble drama curriculum and pedagogy had a positive impact because: it encouraged students’ **participation**; it provided new stimuli to students’ **theatre ability/literacy**; and, in turn, it contributed to the experience of a more confident **ensemble ability** and, hence, suggested to students a more positive **self-perception**. This gradual and cyclical development will now be analysed along the lines of the aforesaid concepts. However, as will be demonstrated in the overall analysis, the development of students’ abilities should be viewed as an interactive and cyclical process, rather than as a linear development of separate skills through divided steps.

Better to conceive this, one could bear in mind Castoriadis' theoretical scheme, where a self-instituted society permits speech and action (here, the establishment of an ensemble-based learning classroom), achieves action and thus self-instituting qualities.

4.1.8.1 Participation

There is evidence that the overwhelming majority of the students perceived the potential of ensemble learning as inclusive and noted that “there is no right and wrong in this module!” (female student, 10/3/2009). Indeed, in developing my own role in the social space of the classroom, I showed a willingness to ‘de-throne power’, respect the students, and I based their lessons on the initiatives they expressed (Neelands, 2009, p.183). During our reflective discussion at the end of the third lesson, a number of students wondered if I would evaluate their group work in the “normal way” (female student, 10/3/2009). The normal way did not mean me interpreting some of their presentations as a co-participant, but that I would evaluate their work in terms of its ‘correctness’ (See appendix eleven). As Castoriadis would argue, in the line of reasoning that men are the polis (andres gar polis), the distribution of self-instituting rights to all the members of the ensemble created democratic (pre conditions for participation (See sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.3). As Bernstein claims, the integration of the learning process to students’ own initiatives distributes among participants what in a collection code would be teachers’ private property and democratises the ownership of the learning process.

In this context, it can be argued that when students became aware that I would only provide them with theatrical tools and stimuli, and that they should find a means and structure for organising and evaluating their presentations by themselves, both their sense of responsibility and their frequency of **participation** increased. This was made gradually apparent both on the social and the fictional level of theatre learning. The

number of students who immediately volunteered to take part spontaneously in an activity or show their group work increased.

In the first lessons, some groups elected not to present their work in the final activity, either because it was not ready, or just because they “did not want to show something” (male student, 24/2/2009). After our third lesson, however, all the groups had some work – more or less developed – that they were willing to present. Some of the *actors-participants* also felt comfortable incorporating things that the *audience-participants* suggested, immediately after their classmates’ responses to their work (17/3/2009, Gallagher, 2000, p. 69). They also commented on their own increased speech and action. At the end of the fourth lesson, during our reflective discussion, three female students agreed with their classmate’s comment that what they liked more about “today’s lesson” was that fact that

we all took part today. ... I mean, OK ... some of us did not play a specific role, like Antigone or Creon. But ... we all did something during our presentations ... I really liked it. (female student, 17/3/2009)

A male student observed that if he knew that

I could do other things than acting, I would be more positive from the very beginning. But I didn’t know that, Miss ... and you know, I don’t want to be an actor ... I want to be ... you know ... when we had to guess what the others present ... especially when they [the still-images] are frozen. (17/3/2009)

Some participants were surprised by their classmates’ desire to take part in the improvisations. One male student, who initially did not want to “to do acting ... and generally to participate at all”, started to take part in the whole group conversations

during our second lesson (3/3/2009); that same student played Haemon in one of the improvisations of the fourth lesson (17/3/2009).

4.1.8.2 Theatre Ability/Literacy

It is argued that the combination of the ensemble theatre curriculum and pedagogy with the subsequent increased **participation**, was progressive only for some students' **theatre ability/literacy**. Whereas the majority of participants became more responsive to the work, their progress was neither systematic nor remarkable. The broadening of the spectrum of what is considered theatre legitimated a wider range of knowledge and increased some students' contributions (Neelands, 1984). In this context multiple 'entry points' opened to accommodate the different strengths of the students (Dickinson and Neelands, 2006; Gullatt, 2008). This opening of the space was beneficial for the expression of skills that would not be considered theatrical in an exclusively intra-aesthetic approach to educational theatre. At the same time, the overall process facilitated the improvement of students' ability to express themselves and manage their self-expression (Fleming, 2001). Nevertheless, this kind of progress was neither often nor clearly manifested in the work of the students. Only some examples represented a more extended apprenticeship of theatre's vocabulary.

At the beginning, it was difficult for the majority of the students to construct abstract meanings or make symbolisations in their performances. If they wanted to present something related to Polynices, they would always position a student lying on the floor. During the fifth lesson (24/3/2009), a group of students positioned a candle next to a piece of fabric laid out on the floor, in order to depict the same meaning.²⁶ It is worth noting that it was not I who brought these props into the classroom – it was the

²⁶ In Greek cemeteries all the tombs are decorated with a candle which is brought by the family of the dead.

students' idea to bring specific props to our final lesson, because they knew that each group would make its own narration of the play (4.1).

Moreover, when students realised that they could bring music for their improvisations, two of the most disengaged male students became particularly interested in the lessons. Whereas at the beginning the music they brought was only superficially linked to the themes of the play, towards the end of our collaboration, students started to find more creative ways to include their favorite music in their work. The first time one student brought music (10/3/2009), the verse of the song described the death of a young man owing to a dangerous life. The student used this song to accompany a scene in which Antigone buries her brother. This student continued to bring different songs to our lessons, on which his classmates often commented through interpretations of these specific improvisations. I also commented once that the songs should not necessarily always relate to the same theme of improvisation – e.g. death – but they could connect with it in different ways to its deeper meanings.

During our fifth lesson (24/3/2009), a group of students presented an improvisation in which different social forces (journalists, Church representatives, and representatives of different political parties) advised Creon. The students of this group had chosen to show that these different forces do not speak honestly, but try to impose their own interests. After the students presented the improvisation, I asked one student to think of a song to accompany this improvisation if we wanted to fade off the voices of the actors with a song. In the fifth lesson in which students performed a whole narration of the story, this student chose a hip-hop song from Greek popular music that talks about the corruption of Greece. It describes the need for a change in the political system in order for young people to “change their opinion” (song title: *Good morning Greece*). His classmates considered the specific choice very relevant because “it was like our

politicians today ... like someone interrupts their conspiracies” (female student, 24/3/2009).

Apart from these examples and some other, more tacit indications of improved learning – that cannot be necessarily viewed as evidence – participants’ **theatrical ability/literacy** was not developed enough in order to for the group to acquire control over the work and autonomy as a “community of learners” (Nicholson, 1998 cited in Kempe, 2000, p.12). Students’ attempts to create abstract meanings through symbolization necessitated, until the end, direction and encouragement. Along the same lines of reasoning, students rarely incorporated the sub-textual meanings of the text in their performative work. It was characteristic that towards the end of the process, although the majority of the students were able to create a kind of a small performance, this performance could not incorporate the elements from our previous work. In students’ final presentation of the story, where different groups were required to present their own version of *Antigone*, only one out of five groups integrated ‘devices’ and ideas from the conventions we used throughout the process. The rest of the groups presented exclusively improvised work which incorporated only some slow motion or still images in order to provide focus.

Whereas the development of an ‘achieved’ theatre ability/literacy cannot be made, it is worth noting that the overall process facilitated students’ familiarisation with performing publicly in the centre of the open space between us. Although the particular theatrical skills of the students were not significantly developed, their gestures and their voices became more aware and easily adaptable to the requests of a performative moment. Furthermore, they acquired a broader ‘view’ of what a theatrical performance consists of, and claims of a more informed spectatorship could be made.

4.1.8.3 Improving Self-perception

This section will examine the ways in which students' increased participation and familiarisation with theatre - as an artistic "vocabulary" that young people "can practice and learn" (Winston, 2010, p.97) - brought positive dimensions for participants' **self-perception** and hence **ensemble ability**. Throughout this ensemble experience of theatre learning, students had the opportunity to express to the rest of the group abilities that were either neglected by other modules of the curriculum, or, to discover for themselves new competencies and forms of meaningful contribution (Dichinson and Neelands, 2006; 1.1, 1.2). This broadening of the spectrum of what is recognised as legitimate knowledge as well as students' gradual achievements had a significant impact on the means of self-recognition of the group. The progressive and inter-subjective recognition of the members of the ensemble had a positive impact on the overall **self-perception** of the group as an artistic, political and social ensemble (**ensemble ability**).

a) Through the Ensemble Practices in the Social Level

Neelands, analysing the intersubjective nature of the creation of personal and social identities, argues that

one recognizes oneself only by virtue of recognizing, and being recognized by another subject. The recognition of others is essential to the development of self-identity. (Neelands, 2007, p.307)

Therefore, the rules that permeate our relationships with others become an inextricable part of the process of recognition and the creation of identity. If the structures of our intersubjective relationships are organised on an authoritative or dominant basis the process of inter-recognition will be seriously affected by this kind of inequality. By

contrast, if the *modus operandi* of communication is organised by a democratic social contract, the possibility for reciprocity is increased.

It can be argued that the value of ensemble practices lies in the democratising basis that they provide to the dialogic process of recognition and formation of identity. The ensemble-based learning which is structured on the principles of *isonomia* and *isegoria* (See section 2.1) (Neelands, 2009, p.183) makes the process of recognition a **dialogic practice** between equal members of the same group. This basis of cooperation renders the members of the ensemble equal participants in the process of inter-recognition and restricts the power of external or authoritative expertise that would – in other educational paradigms – address the recognition. Hence, by experiencing this alternative model that suggests *isonomic* and *isegoric* practices and communicative actions, the group of students is provided with the opportunity to interrogate the terms of the established self-identity, to alter or re-create them according to the new standards of participation. In other words, the ensemble is encouraged to re-institute the terms of their common **self-perception**.

Thus, through this ensemble experience of theatre-making in the classroom and through the emergent realisation that everyone's contribution matters, participants developed new understandings of themselves and re-recognised each other on the basis of the group's interests (Neelands, 2010, pp.155-156). The ensemble way of working interrogated the norms by which students were used to being recognised individually. The inclusive participation enabled the members of the group to discover and recognise each other's social and artistic roles, and therefore to develop a certain degree of autonomy as a group, and improve their perception of themselves as an ensemble. The subversion of the standards of "who has ownership over the means and processes of social and artistic representation" (Neelands, 2007, pp.310) created new standards for

social interaction, and developed students' ensemble ability, both in terms of social becoming and of artistic creation. More specifically, at the beginning of the project the students who raised their hands to speak would start their phrase with doubt, as evidenced below:

- Male student, attempting to make an overall observation for the lesson (24/2/2009): Miss, I'll say something but I don't know whether it is correct ...
- Male student, attempting to respond to his classmate's improvisation: Can I say something ... but I don't know if it is relevant ...?
- Female student, inviting me into her group to ask something (3/3/2009): Miss, am I allowed to ask something or we must firstly present and then ask?

But during the two final lessons, students' improved self-perception – as a whole group or as sub-groups in which they collaborated for each activity – was gradually apparent. In the fourth lesson, the majority of the students was enthusiastic, instead of embarrassed or hesitant, about an idea they proposed in their groups or in the whole group discussion.

- Male student, attempting to comment on an activity in which one of the students had to be the sculptor (17/3/2009): I really liked this one. Because if the other explains ... you might still not understand ... you know ... now is different. Because even if you don't understand, you will see it **on** your body [emphasis according to his voice intonation] ... I can say that because I saw it when other people presented ... I don't know [addressing to his classmates] what do you think? (2.4, 3.3)
- Female student, responding to another group's work (24/3/2009): I think that what this group did was really good ... I really liked it because it was like ... real theatre. ...

because, you see ... Irene (pseudonym, the girl who played Antigone) took it very seriously and all of them ... really helped her, really supported her ... and you know ... they did not care about ‘being the clever of the case’ [Greek expression that is used when someone wants to be the one who is distinguished from the others] (3.1, 3.2)

- Female student, inviting me into her group to see their work before their presentation (24/3/2009): Miss, do you want to come and see before we present? I think it is nice ... everyone had good ideas. (2.4, 3.3, 4.1)

In this context, one can observe the interaction between the improvement of the **self-perception** and the development of **ensemble ability**, as was made apparent in the social/real level of drama process. As the students inter-recognised each other through valuing each other’s ideas (**ensemble ability**), they were becoming more confident as a group (**self-perception**). This means that the more they were experiencing the isonomic and the isegoric conditions of cooperating and acting, the more their ensemble initiative and autonomy developed (**self-perception** and **ensemble ability**). In turn, the more their ensemble ability developed, the more their self-perception improved and vice versa.

b) Through the Mechanism of the Stage as Public Participation

The existence of an audience characterises theatre as an art form and as a practice, and renders it “the most public of art forms” (Nicholson, 2005, p.19). “Even if it is only the actors themselves reflecting on their own and other players’ performances” (Booth, 2003, p.19), the idea of an audience, and hence, the sense of publicness, is integral to theatre structures in an artistic and an educational form. It is argued that students’ performance in public constituted a significant practice for students’ **self-perception**. As discussed in the first chapter public participation constitutes a core practice of active citizenship and democratic politics. However, this kind of knowledge

can neither be theoretically constructed, nor activated solely by critical information (Anyon, 2009, p.389).

It is the practical involvement of individuals that enables them to become active participants in broader, public domains (Tully, 2004). From this perspective, it can be argued that ensemble theatre – providing the device of a stage/public space where everyone comments on everyone else and the final “product” of artistic action is filtered by this process – becomes an educational opportunity for actual involvement. It can function as a miniature of the public sphere. The public sharing of narratives, feelings and ideas through the theatrical means of expression, and the different forms of articulation that conventions provide (Kempe, 2000, p.21; Fleming, 2001, p.139), signifies a passage from the social to the public level of appearance and communication. This public model of participating in drama – which was also combined with further public reflection between the members of different groups – familiarised students with public performance and improved their confidence as public actors and interlocutors. In turn, the experience of this public form of participation contributed to the construction of a public sphere in which the public self was empowered, reflected upon and recognised.

Throughout the progression of the lesson, the majority of students’ improvisations became more confident, their public speech more argumentative, and the majority of participants could meaningfully sustain a role for more than eight minutes. In contrast to the lack of confidence that students expressed in the second lesson when they were asked to perform as citizens, during our fourth lesson, three out of five groups of ‘citizens’ who visited Creon to convince him to reconsider his position argued with him for almost ten minutes. As one of the participants characteristically said, “we are not leaving if we don’t make sure that you really listen to us” (female student, 17/3/2009; 4.1). This improvement in public appearance and communication was gradually

acquiring consciousness through the comments that the *participant-audience* was giving to the *participant-actors* (Gallagher, 2000, p.69). More than eight students in the fourth lesson – and more than sixteen in our final lesson – noted their improved ability to play “in front of the others without being afraid” (**self-perception**) and in “just standing up and trying” (female student, male student 24/3/2009; 4.1). Students’ increased and improved **participation** in this kind of public sphere became another course towards publicly achieved recognition and a positive aspect of their **self-perception**.

c) Through the Symbolic World as an Inter-complementary Experience

The construction of the symbolic reality, and the participation in it, gave students the opportunity to experience new self-presentations that were significant for the overall endeavour of the affirmation and the positive re-creation of students’ image of collective self (Fraser cited in Neelands, 2007). Theatre’s fiction can be viewed as an opportunity for “other possibilities, other realities to be experienced and valued” (Winston, 2004, p.2).

The symbolic reality, by inviting students to act as if it was real, creates new possibilities with the potential to challenge or alter our world-views, and our collective **self-perception** (Neelands, 2010, p.155; Gallagher, 2000, p.58). This experience is not an isolated depiction of life; rather, it is *enacted* and real, itself. In this sense it is dynamic, and can be transformative (Gallagher, 2000, p.58; Fleming, 2001, p.146). It can be argued that Gallagher provides an option for realising Castoriadis’ *social imaginary* in the context of the fictional world:

What became clear was that students, whose understanding of a dramatic world that is based on their experience of an actual world and their personal criteria for making judgements, can be

poignantly challenged by dramatic role-play. [...] (Gallagher, 2000, p.58)

Change, then, can take place in the creative imagination. Because,

the fictional while presenting a particular view of truth, also challenges previous understandings of ‘the truth’ of a situation.
(*ibid.*)

This way of experiencing citizenship through *Antigone* provided students with a frame to “dream up together the details of the context of their created world” (*ibid.*), and to construct a primal, but still important, experienced understanding of a more active form of citizenship. A form in which they were themselves responsible for valuing each other’s contribution and developing collective action according to the indications of their *social imaginary*. On the same line of reasoning as Gallagher’s, it was not only the real world that was capable of denying them the direct participation in Sophocles’ play’s politics, but it was also the imagined world that provided them with an alternative truth to re-inform their social reality and their **self-perception**. Theatre’s potential for “transformation”, which was also noted by students as a powerful element of our first lesson (See section 4.2.3), contributed to the ways in which participants experienced the process and informed their self-perceptions.

At the end of the project, when students had to be transformed into Theban citizens, they were more familiar with the role of citizen and participated more actively in the decisions that each scene demanded. By playing the governor (Creon), the citizens (chorus and other improvisations), the reactionary (for some students), the revolutionary (for others), and an individual (Antigone), they acquired resources to perform citizenship. During the final lessons, students proposed a list of alternative suggestions to Creon and Antigone, in order for them to make better decisions for the polis. For

instance, they suggested that Creon bury Polynices outside the city of Thebes, give his dead body back to Argos, let Antigone bury him without the honour of the polis, ask citizens to vote concerning the issues, or ask the polis' juridical authorities to decide the young woman's future (17/3/2009; 4.1). The content of their suggestions varied, but their common significance lies in their realisation that "their ideas matter" in the creation of an "active culture of participation", both in the social, and the symbolic political reality of the play (Nicholson, 2000, p.9).

The broadening of the scope of their political socialisation was not only encouraged by a richer grasp of political processes (Elmer, 1997, p.187; **participation**), but also by the gradual belief in themselves as a genesis of action (Nelson, 2011, p.170; **self-perception**). In sustaining their roles for longer, and in arguing about the next steps of the plot, participants started to become conscious of their power. The female student, who at the beginning said that she did not feel important as a citizen (See section 4.2.4) participated in one of the groups which succeeded to convince Antigone to change her mind regarding the legitimacy of her action in its public dimension. This female student participated significantly, and gave a very convincing argument during the improvisation. When at the end the female student who played Antigone said that she might have acted differently had it not been for that argument, the girl from the group of citizens – realising the power of her social imagination - said, "I don't believe it! I changed the play!" (17/3/2009; 4.1,4.2).

From this perspective, it can be argued that the fictional worlds functioned as opportunities for students to experience an active version of citizenship, to participate actively in the public sphere of the play, and to undertake, collectively, dynamic decisions for the ways in which the plot of the play should be developed. This theatrical opportunity – based on group work and publicly discussed ideas – enabled students to

experience the learning and the artistic process through different roles; this also enabled them, therefore, to influence, enrich or interrogate the negative self-perception through experience of a more positive process of mutual/inter-subjective recognition (Neelands, 2010, p.155; 2004, pp.50-54).

As analysed above (See section 2.1.6), Tully theorises about the struggles of recognition, and explains that even if a new recognition or redistribution is not achieved, experiencing this struggle is enough, at least, to disseminate (in a small way) the identity of individuals or groups – even if it does not change that identity. Along the same line of reasoning, I do not claim that this process was enough to alter, change or modify students’ self-perceptions. But I do believe that the experience of a democratic model of theatre education provided an experience, even if it was bracketed, of what it means to speak and act, to participate in order to take equal part in the process of decision making and worlds creation.

4.1.8.4 Self-instituting Dimensions and Limitations

For Castoriadis, the self-institution consists in citizens’ abilities to imagine things differently, and to act collectively in order to institute their reality accordingly. In the context of this process, the terms of inclusive participation encouraged students to recognise new roles between themselves, and to legitimate new perceptions, which led to an upgraded quality of action, on both the artistic and the social level. This social process of becoming, or of self-re-creation, can be viewed as a first step towards self-institution but cannot be considered as a sufficiently developed ability for the whole group. This step was initially realised in groups between the members of the group who started to collaborate in order to present together. It was later ‘spread’ throughout the whole classroom cooperation when groups started to present their work to each other, in order to exchange comments, or when they started to bring music and props for other

groups' work (See section 4.2.7.2). Following Freire's theory – according to which students' decision making renders students autonomous (1998, p.97) – experiencing decision making in different phases and levels of the process enabled students to communicate and enact ideas that determined the content of their learning experience. However, students' decision-making, initiative and therefore autonomy were not developed to determine the procedures of the learning experience. In a more theoretical perspective, it can be argued that ensemble-based learning came close to establishing an open space in which Habermasian communicative actions were achieved and produced democracy, but Castoriadis' more collective, self-instituting possibility appeared only as a potential.

During the fourth and fifth lessons, students suggested ideas about what they would like to do next. For example, some of the students expressed their interest regarding Ismene's role, "who has been left out" (female student, 17/3/2009), and proposed to improvise how Ismene would feel after some episodes of the play. Along the same line of reasoning, students asked me if they could bring their cameras to record the process (10/3/2009). I explained to them that I would also like to bring my camera, but this was not allowed by the director of the school. After the lesson, they made a small 'committee' of three persons, who asked permission from the director to bring their cameras. Their request was not granted, but this should not underestimate the value of their initiative.

4.1.9 An Overall Limitation

Although the overall public dimension that characterised the experience of drama had positive implications for students' "self-perception", the limitations that were imposed by the school constrained to a certain degree the positive impact that this process could have had. In the first place, the overall project was isolated in this school

environment. This was exemplified by the fact that I was not allowed to take pictures, to video-tape students, or to invite a critical friend to attend or to participate in the process. It is useful to note that even when students asked if they were allowed to bring their cameras, the director of the school denied it. It was disappointing that although some of the students valued their participation in this process and wanted either to share it, or to keep their own records of their collaboration – to “show what we do to our friends” (male student, 10/3/2009), and “to remember all these nice moments” (female student, 10/3/2009) – such an opportunity was denied.

As well as being denied the opportunity to video-record the process, both students and I were denied the opportunity to present participants’ versions of the story. Although the initial agreement anticipated a small presentation to the other class of the same grade (and not to the rest of the school as my proposal suggested), this too was also ultimately denied: the administration of the school decided that such a change in the other class’s schedule would cause too much disruption (24/3/2009).

As has been discussed above, the “formation of personal and social identity is an inter-subjective and dialogic process” (Neelands, 2007, p.307). This isolation of the project through the prohibition of the final presentation and the restriction of its communicative and communicated dimension influenced part of the *socio-theatrical* completion of the process; it also made students doubt, or neglect, their feelings of achievement, which were replaced, *once more*, by feelings of disappointment. It can be argued that this privatisation is confrontational, both to the politics of ensemble theatre, and to the practices of active citizenship. At the same time, this isolation is confrontational both to the dialogic forms of recognition, and to active citizenship, because it denies the possibility of public participation, and of development of the identity of an active citizen.

4.2 School B (Arts-School)

The second phase of this research project took place in an Arts High School in the north-eastern suburbs of Athens, in the Municipality of Gerakas.²⁷ The school's specialism is in the arts-curriculum it provides through specific Directions of Art, which students have to choose before being accepted into the school. The arts directions include three arts-options: theatre, fine arts and dance. Hence, students take exams in the art-direction of their choice, and, after being accepted by the school, the arts curriculum runs in parallel (but separately) to the official curriculum of the Greek High School. This means that the module classes which students attend for the official curriculum are mixed in terms of students' arts-direction. After the end of the official curriculum, by contrast, students are separated into different groups according to their arts-direction; this is in order to attend the arts curriculum of their choice.

The contact with the school was made through the mediation of Nikos Govas – theatre/drama educator, Cultural Projects Co-ordinator at Directorate of Secondary Education Eastern Attica, Editor of the 'Theatre & Education' Journal and one of the founders of the Hellenic Association of Drama and Theatre Education. The curriculum of the theatre-direction – owing to the emphasis it gives to theatre – has enabled the teachers of this direction often to collaborate with Mr Govas, as well as with different practitioners of the Hellenic Association of Drama and Theatre Education. This case study differentiated from the previous one owing to multiple differences between the two educational environments, and to three additional determining factors that will be analysed in this section. First, the process took place in the context of the *Ancient Greek Language Curriculum*. Second, the third cycle of the action research involved a 'critical

²⁷ Gerakas is a newly formed municipality, a result of the ongoing expansion of the city of Athens. It is sparsely inhabited within a large geographical, partly non-urban area, recently developing residentially with increasing value of property. The region has no communal cultural capital itself, apart from the public Arts High School founded in 2004, the only one in Attica and one of three in the whole country.

friend’, and two more participants that attended the process and evaluated it at the end. Finally, the integration of the lesson in the Ancient Greek module, and the participation of students from different arts directions, did not permit initial observation and subsequent re-planning of the project according to the observed data.

4.2.1. Considering the two Differentiating Factors

a) Integrating ensemble theatre into *Ancient Greek Language Learning*

Unlike the previous phase, the second school did not accommodate the project in a theatre-based module, but as an introductory project to the teaching of Sophocles’ *Antigone*. In Greece, *Antigone* is taught in the fifth grade of Secondary Education as a compulsory subject in the wider category of *Modules of General Education*; more specifically, it is taught in the context of the *Greek Language Learning* (Institute of Education, accessed 10/4/09). It is useful to note that the whole play is taught as a literature text of Cultural Heritage, and is divided into two learning units (accessed 10/4/09).

The first unit concerns the exclusive teaching of the ancient text in terms of Ancient Greek language, namely grammar and syntax; the second unit refers to the text as a representative masterpiece of the classical Greek world, and focuses on the meaning that students make of the civilisation of their ancestors – that is, of the Ancient Greek world. Therefore, the second target of the module emphasises the interpretation of the text; or, as it is stated in the syllabi of the Ministry of Education, in its “hermeneutics” (accessed 10/4/09). The reason for integrating the project in the context of *Ancient Greek Poetry Literature* lay in the School Director’s interest to explore the function of this enterprise in the academic curriculum, and in the philologist’s willingness to “try new ways of teaching ancient drama” (23/09/2009). In this framework, the drama

lessons were conducted at the beginning of the academic year and aimed to function as an introductory and stimulating learning process. From the very beginning, I informed the Director of the school and the philologist that the specific project could not – in the context of this inquiry and given the time restrictions – contribute to the first unit of the module; hence, a clear agreement was made that, at that particular time, the overall enterprise could possibly be helpful or motivating, but only with regards to the second unit of the module that referred to the hermeneutics of the “piece of *literature*” (determined by the official syllabus) (accessed 10/04/09, my emphasis).

I considered this integration to a module different from Educational Theatre both necessary – given the impediments I encountered in order to be accepted in a very wide range of schools – and challenging, owing to the incorporation of ensemble theatre in the core official curriculum. This implied a double challenge of official pedagogy concerning the teaching of such “sacred” texts as those of ancient Greek poets: the official curriculum approaches ancient tragedy not only from an absolutely non-theatrical perspective, but also and mostly from extremely authoritative interpretative perspectives, an ideological stance that aims to ensure how the country’s cultural heritage should be transmitted as knowledge to young students (Apple, 2005; Institute of Education, ‘Guidance for the teaching of philological subjects in the Greek Hi-School’, p.38 accessed 10/4/2009). Beginning from the later ‘challenge’, my concern derived from the possible tension that could be generated between, on the one hand, the conceptual and the practical frameworks of the ensemble theatre learning, and, on the other, the official curriculum authoritative ways of approaching learning and knowledge through specific narratives of the subjects to be taught. Ensemble theatre-making as a process of learning is based on a range of principles that are often distant or even

contradictory to “the direction in which knowledge and authority traditionally flow” (Gallagher, 2007, p.173).

In order to place this authoritative direction of knowledge in the context of the module of *Ancient Greek Poetry and Literature*, I would like to cite a characteristic abstract from the ‘Guidance for the teaching of philological subjects in the Greek High’ School. This abstract refers to the “aims of teaching dramatic poetry, Sophocles’ *Antigone*” (accessed 10/4/2009):

[T]he students, in the context of a multi-perspective approach, are expected: ... To avoid the interpretation of tragedy in an abstract or ideological level, for instance, as a conflict between the written and the unwritten laws, the polity and the family etc. They should feel that the tragic element (especially of Creon and Antigone) derives from the heroes’ deliberation and choice. Thus, the hubristic decision of Creon for the dead Polynices brings him in gradual conflict with the Guard, the chorus, Antigone, Haemon, Teireseas, until his final catastrophe. Contrarily, the insistence of Antigone to bury her brother is characterised by her boldness to follow with dignity her decision that conducted her to the physical death but also to her, commonly accepted, moral vindication/justification of her action[.] (accessed 10/4/09)

It is argued that whilst this extract claims to promote a ‘multi-perspectival’ approach to the play, it tends to narrate a very specific reading of the plot that can be classified in the *separative* interpretational tradition of *Antigone* (See section 2.3.3). However, the multiplicity of interpretive possibilities (when education includes texts of cultural heritage) is viewed as a significant endeavour of critical education. According to Giroux a critical pedagogy should give “the possibility for the students to creatively appropriate

the past as part of a living dialogue” (Giroux, 1992, p.76). For this reason, young people should be given the tools and the opportunity

to judge those narrative(s) not as timeless or monolithic discourse, but as social and historical inventions that can be refigured in the interests of creating more democratic forms of public life. (*ibid.*)

In order for this living dialogue, that Giroux suggests, to take place, one-dimensional or grand narratives should either be avoided, or be examined as one possibility among others. Stressing the same line of reasoning, Apple and King argue that one of the main practices that renders official education a reproductive ideological institution consists in the one-dimensional or consensual meanings that it ascribes to knowledge (2005, p.123). Schools viewing the homogeneity of beliefs, ideals and models of behaviour as synonymous with the idea of community or society ‘incriminate’ oppositional discourses; hence, they also ‘incriminate’ the development of students’ ability to remake their communities/societies (Shor, 2009; Apple and King 2005, p.149).

Considering this syllogism, it is argued that in the case of Sophocles’ play, the teaching of the text in the light of the hubristic action of Creon – and of the moral vindication of Antigone – deprives the tragic play of a range of interpretations that could encourage a living dialogue between the students and the play’s cosmos. This, in turn, does not allow learning to become a means of meaningful reflection for students to remake society/community, and redevelop themselves as democratic agents (Shor, 2009). The second ‘challenge’ generated by the integration of the project within the compulsory module of *Ancient Greek Poetry and Literature*, and by the possible ideological oppositions between the ensemble drama approach to learning, and the conservative/monolithic perspectives of the official curriculum, was the resetting of

Sophocles' play in its theatrical basis – a task of particular significance in the context of the Greek school system. In this system, all the masterpieces of Greek theatre are taught as texts of literature, while theatre remains an optional subject at the margins of the curriculum. Acknowledging the fundamental role that drama can play in the exploration of the classical texts (Kempe, 2000; Rygiel, 1992), I considered this integration even more significant for the context of the specific school. I did so because, whilst it provided an arts/theatre curriculum, the practical position and function of this curriculum in the overall context of the school evidenced its conceptual distance to the official modules. In the first place, the organisational context itself – in which the art curriculum was taught only at the end of the school day and after the official one had been completed – demonstrated that the arts functioned separately from the rest of the official curriculum.

Moreover, the philologist emphasised the “separate function” of the two curricula. During the first conversation I had with the philologist, I realised that she had “never heard something similar, before” (23/9/2009). Elaborating on this, she explained to me that she “had never attempted any kind of interaction between the arts and the official curriculum, because it is difficult to compose something out of these different things” (23/9/2009). From this perspective, it is argued that, instead of incorporating the arts modules within the educational reality of the students, the theatre/arts remained, once more, detached from the rest of the curriculum, and the frames of school knowledge. In this context, the interaction of drama with another module could ascribe a further dialogic and integrated nature to the overall enterprise. Connecting drama with *Ancient Greek Poetry and Literature* would, inevitably, open a dialogue between the curriculum and the pedagogy of the two modules; this could prove beneficial for the overall practices of this school.

As Greene argues, if societies and educational institutions desire a curriculum that permits students to make connections to their wider lives, the exploration of relationships – especially through the perspectives that arts provide to the learning experience – constitutes a significant experience (Greene, 2000, pp.89-90). Therefore, using the less prescribed meanings of drama (Eisner, 2002), which permit “different nuances of interpretations” (Winston, 2004, p.21), students (and the philologist) could enrich their classroom practices; they could subsequently search for further dialogue/connections between the two parallel curriculums of the school.

In this context, though, a matter of principle arose: that ensemble participation should be a deliberate choice of young people (Neelands, 2004). The integration of ensemble theatre in a module that is attended by students who are not necessarily interested in drama was an equally ambiguous decision. More specifically, as the module of *Ancient Poetry and Literature* is included in the core programme of the official curriculum as a compulsory module, the group of participants would be therefore composed of students from different arts-directions (namely drama, fine-arts and dance-directions). Hence, to address and to secure a feeling of voluntary participation of students constituted a major issue. After analysing the particularity of integrating ensemble theatre to the *Ancient Greek Poetry and Literature*, the two other particularities of this action research cycle will be discussed.

b) Methodological Subversions

The second differentiating factor in this school concerned the methodological frame of this project, and lay in the inclusion of more participants in the level of observation, data analysis and evaluation. In the first place, the inclusion of the project in the context of ancient learning would give the philologist increased motives and,

hence, a more active role in the observation and evaluation of the project. Additionally, Mr Govas agreed to attend the entire project and evaluate it through a questionnaire filled in after its completion (See appendix one). Finally, the Director of the school permitted the participation of another theatre educator who could undertake the role of a critical friend (See section 3.6). The critical friend, Ms Iro Potamoussi, is a drama practitioner and graduate of the Sociology Department of Panteion University, with a Master's degree in Drama and Theatre Education.

However, the methodological context was further modified by the restricted contextual data I had for the school, and therefore also modified by the limitations that this restriction imposed on the planning of the first lesson.

In the first place, it is noted that contextual data for the specific school – that could have been gathered through previous arrangements with the director or the philologist – were limited (in this case) because all the arrangements were mediated by Mr Govas and the Directorate of Secondary Education of Eastern Attica. The only information I had about the school was gleaned by access to its website (<http://gym-kall-gerak.att.sch.gr/>; accessed 11/09/09). It provided data about: the structure of the programme; different projects that had taken place in the school; students' festivals and celebrations; awards that had been awarded by the different teachers and different groups of students; and photographic samples of students' work. The restricted data also concerned the more particular context of **theatre curriculum and pedagogy**, owing to the lesson's integration to the *Ancient Greek Learning* which resulted, as has been mentioned, in the fact that the students did not come solely from the drama-direction. In this context, there was limited reason to attend a drama class, because this would detail the experience of only some of the students. From this perspective, I should re-focus on the previous curriculum and pedagogy of the *Ancient Greek Learning*, in order to be informed of the

ways in which the module was taught. However, I was not provided with this opportunity, because the Director of the school, who was entitled to grant me the permission of attendance, was only available to meet me before the beginning of my first lesson. Meanwhile, the philologist assured me that

Vasso: I do it in the regular/standard way. As the syllabus indicates. The only thing is that I incorporate a range of exercises that are provided by the Ministry of Education.

Myrto: Are they text-based? The tasks, I mean. Or do you use any kind of other methods?

Vasso: No. Just exercises for the text. I like theatre. In the previous school I worked in, I had also organised a performance. But I do not put it in this module. (Phone conversation 23/9/2009, transcribed at the moment of the phone call.)

Considering these circumstances, I asked the Director to allow me to conduct a short introductory lesson lasting one academic hour (forty-five minutes), prior to the official beginning of the project, planned for 5 October. The Director gave me the opportunity for this introductory lesson and she indicated that I should discuss and arrange the issue of video recording and of the participation of the critical friend with the students arrange myself the video-recording of the lesson. I had no direct contact with the director and all these mediations were made through Mr Govas.

4.2.2 First Lesson (28/9/2009)

All the students agreed to my inviting a critical friend to observe our process, but they would not consent to be filmed: although the majority of students agreed to be

video-recorded, three students – all from the fine arts direction – did not consent to be filmed. They explained that

Female student: ... [I am] uncomfortable with the camera.

Male student: I just don't want to be video-taped.

Male student: I just don't want to appear in your film. I have the right to say no.

Myrto: If you change your mind let me know, because it is very important for me to have direct access to your ideas.

Female student: ... You can use the camera looking at the floor or something. If you want to have our words. (data from the fieldnotes 28/9/2009)

The other students also agreed; therefore, I recorded the entire first lesson only through an audio-recording, adding some descriptions that I made in order to remember students' improvisations.

The lesson started with a small introduction, through which students were introduced to the conceptual framework of the project and asked to share their own expectations about this project (See appendix seven, activity one). In this context, students who did not 'originate' from the theatre-direction were encouraged to express their own dispositions towards the project. The majority of the students' answers tended to agree that they would like to "see something different" (female student, fine arts-direction) that would enable them to "acquire further interest for the lesson" (male student, dance-direction). This would "give us motivation for this module" (female student, film and drama direction). In the same context, the majority of students who originated from dance-direction said that they would like to "try things out in theatre,

because it is a bit like dance with more ‘speaking elements’” (female student); meanwhile, the majority of fine-arts students expressed a certain hesitation with regards to their ability to ‘do’ drama. For example, one student said that,

I am not good at acting, and I know it. And when I tried, once, they laughed. [indicating the students from theatre-direction, who were seated close to each other] But I don’t mind, anyway. I know it. I am not talented in acting. But I would like to try.
(female student, fine arts-direction).

In this context, I explained to the students about the ensemble way of working, and the opportunities it provides to undertake different roles and different responsibilities. I also told them that sometimes theatre is not as distant as they might think from creating meanings through images, and that they might discover things both about themselves and theatre.

Subsequently, students were asked to create still images with stereotypical depictions of theatre. In this context, the majority of students ‘froze’ in an over-expressive gesture, with their hands raised and opened (See appendix seven, activity two). Then, students were asked to represent – in groups this time – what theatre meant to them, beyond stereotypes (See appendix seven, activity three). Before describing their still-images, it is noted that their arts-directions constituted the main criterion for the formation of the groups. All the students from the theatre-direction made two groups by incorporating only one student from the dance-direction; the students from the dance-direction made a group of three people (while the activity required groups of four); and the students from the fine arts-direction made a group by themselves. After my suggestion that the groups should include people from different arts-directions, the separation in groups became a “difficult task” (male student, theatre-direction), because

this would not allow the groups to talk in their “own languages” (female student, theatre-direction). More specifically,

the collaboration would be easier with classmates from the same arts-direction, because we have our own language. So the communication and the result will be better. (male student, theatre-direction)

The first group presented the directing of a performance, with three students acting on stage, and one standing opposite to them and showing them something; the second group performed with actors performing something extremely passionately, based on the exaggerated facial expressions of the student; the third group – constituted of four members of theatre-direction – performed with an audience, presenting an interesting communication between a performance and its audience. In this image the ‘picture’/scene between the two actors, remaining alone, stimulated the imagination of the members of the audience to think how they would feel if they remained alone. In summary, it can be argued that students’ depictions of theatre varied, but the majority did not provide evidence of a particularly inclusive perception of theatre, because they did not reveal different versions or styles of the art form. *Drama and Theatre Studies in A/AS Level* (2000) suggests and structures a multi-perspectival teaching of theatre that introduces students to a range of theatre genres, acting styles, modes of rehearsal, or even functions of theatre in different historical eras. Taking into account the students’ still-images, it could be hypothesised that students either ignored these multiple versions and modes of theatre, or they deliberately did not include them in their performances.

After the first lesson, two meetings were arranged with the philologist and the director of the school, respectively. During the meeting with the philologist, an analytical presentation of the project took place in order to provide her with further

information about: the origins of the ensemble drama; the conceptual framework of this study; the methodology; and the overall planning of the lessons. The philologist was not familiar with the subject of drama, but she was “interested to try something new, especially in this school where students might be talented in arts, but weak in the modules that need studying” (28/9/2009).²⁸ In this context, I asked her to explain the possible reasons for this weakness:

Myrto: Why do you think that they don’t study?

Philologist: I don’t know. Generally, the differences between a private school and public school are a lot, you know.

Myrto: Yes. I understand. But still. It is different not being so disciplined as Ursulines’ students and not study at all.

Philologist: I think that they feel that they don’t need studying. They put emphasis on their roles as artists, and neglect their role as students.

Myrto: So, they do not aim to sit the National Exams for the University?

Philologist: I don’t know. It depends. But generally they are not interested in studying. In official education ... If you can imagine, the parents are not coming to take the Semester Results.²⁹ When I was in Ursulines, this was a big day. All the parents used to come to ask me further questions about the students’ progress. Whereas here, they are not even coming to take the official paper, let alone to ask questions.

²⁸ It must be noted that the philologist had only worked for two years in this school and her previous job was in the ‘Ursuline High School of Athens’ which is generally considered as a very good private school with high achievement in the University.

²⁹ Marks that are given by the teachers for each lesson and are given in the context of Greek School every January and June. The schools arrange a special day for this occasion – normally afternoon, because during the morning some parents might be at work – in which the official paper (with the marks) is provided and each teacher is given a room (classroom) where the parents can visit them.

Myrto: Are they coming to attend their performances or to view their exhibitions?

Philologist: Some of them come more ... [She means that some parents are more likely to come in the performances and the exhibitions than in Semester Results].

The meeting with the Director was very short because she realised that she did not have time. In this context, a few things for the project were mentioned and her interest in “innovative projects” manifested. Additionally, she underlined the exceptionality of the students who are at the school in terms of their “artistic talent”. (DN, Key words noted in my fieldnotes immediately after my encounter with the director: “great opportunity for you” ... “because the school” ... “not a typical public school” “students: talented” “students: different”.)

The duration of our first encounter with the students, as well as the extent of our theatrical activity, was limited. For this reason, the theme of students’ **political consciousness** remained unexplored even on an introductory level. Data with regards to students’ **participation** and **theatre ability/literacy** were also restricted. However, some very basic data could be observed regarding students’ “attitude/disposition”, which can be viewed as a sub-unity, or a pre-condition of the broader category of students’ **participation**. It can be observed that students from the theatre-direction, in addition to students from the dance-direction, felt more comfortable with the process which, according to their perception of theatre, would be based on acting.

Nevertheless, students’ **theatre ability/literacy** – to the extent it was observed – permitted all the students to create clear and comprehensible meanings through the body positions they chose in order to represent what was demanded. However, taking into

account the limited data I had about students, the second lesson remained almost the same as in its initial planning, although some changes took place with regards to the roles that each activity provided to the members of the group. For example, more ‘collective characters’, or theatrical games that necessitate tied collaboration – such as when a student’s physical presentation is accompanied by another student’s voice – were promoted in order for participants to experience acting and directing in more collective terms than their still-images depicted.

4.3.3 Second Lesson (5/10/2009)

The overall data from the second lesson enabled both me and the critical friend to make better sense of students’ **participation, ensemble ability, political consciousness**, as well as about – two new codes that emerged – students’ **perception of arts/theatre and self-perception as artists**.³⁰

The second lesson was informative with regard to students’ **political consciousness**, as it provided us with data – both performative and dialogic – about students’ political ideas and also with regard to our introduction to the political context of *Antigone*. Starting from the ‘given circumstances’ of the play, we explored the events that precede the prologue: this takes place in the post-war polis of Thebes after Polynices’ alliance with the polis of Argos, and invasion of Thebes (See appendix eight, activity one). The predominant discourses, as well as the morality and the conditions that characterise a post-war society, were performatively explored, and reflectively discussed. These presentations were compared and contrasted with the analogous depictions that students created for the principles and the practices that govern a

³⁰ Mrs Potamoussi was provided with all the plans of the lessons as well as with the codes of the research in order to keep her own fieldnotes/records for the progression of the process (See section 3.6).

democratic polis. Through this extended introduction to some of the play's themes, students' political ideas and concerns found expression in the public space that was created by students' performances and ideas. In this context, students prioritised the structural elements of democratic life: they talked about contemporary democracies, as well as about different elements that are considered essential for a democratic regime but which – according to the majority of the students – are often encountered “only in papers” (male student, theatre-direction), and are more-or-less absent from contemporary societies. The students' presentations included a range of ideas regarding the rights that citizens have in a democracy, such as freedom of speech, education, solidarity, and participation in decision-making.

In the second phase, we focused on the post-war conditions, and the respective fragmentation of principles and values that follows after a determinant socio-political crisis. Students performed scenes of violence, citizens' suspicion, natural catastrophe as well as political oppression (with some people hiding the mouths of others with their hands). Apart from their powerful still images, the reflective discussion that followed proved to be very engaging for the students, who apart from analysing each other's still-images, were willing to discuss the importance that these principles have for their own lives. This conversation gradually became a political dialogue that focused on the distance that sometimes characterises the political theory from the social reality, and on the tensions that often arise from the conflicting interests of the authority and the citizens:

Male student (dance-direction): Education, or voting, are key rights for democracy, but sometimes they lose their meaning, whereas ... they should keep their meaning to be important.

Myrto: In which way do they lose their meaning?

Male student (dance-direction): Education is not one thing. There are a lot of things that can be education. There is not only one distinction between education and not education. You know what I mean ... one might have education but this education might be fascistic, for example. ... It is the same with voting! You might have the right to vote but there is a lot of propaganda.

Myrto: Whose responsibility is this? Who should take care of this?

Female student, fine arts direction: All of us. ... But we do not do it. We remain asleep

Male student, theatre direction (the same): It is easier. That's why.

The conversation was engaging for the majority of the students, and almost all of them participated at some point. Apart from being actively engaged in the conversation, participants seemed to enjoy this form of communication among themselves, and when they were interviewed at the end of the project, they referred to this specific moment either as “one of the great times that we exchanged opinions” (female student, theatre-direction) or as “one of the best things that we did” (female student, fine arts-direction): “[B]ecause, we really wanted to talk about these things. It was like we opened the conversation. Not like when we have to do it in the lesson” (male student, dance-direction, final interview: appendix fourteen, 16/11/2009).

Apart from students' **political consciousness**, the second lesson intended to explore **students' participation, theatrical ability/literacy**, and **students' ensemble ability**. However, during the activities of the lesson, in certain attitudes of the majority of students, recurring in various forms, I observed two interactive factors that influenced structurally both the cooperation of the students, and their dynamic as a social and

artistic group. As a result, apart from the already existing codes to be explored, a new theme classified in two codes seemed to emerge. It is argued that students' **perception of arts/theatre** as a product exclusively of "talent" and "expression of self" would constitute a further subject for exploration. More specifically, these students' **perception of arts** seemed to lead to a **self-perception as artists** in the context of the classroom,³¹ and hence to create an identity and a narrative of self that was not encouraging for a collaborative process of learning. Rather, it emphasised an individual uniqueness. At the same time, this specific perception rendered some participants – those of theatre-direction – more privileged in theatre **participation**. This last feature can be linked to a general acceptance of expertise and certain individuals being experts in their fields, and thus able to speak and act with more authority. As a result, students' **ensemble ability**, and (in some cases) students' **theatre ability/literacy**, were often intercepted/restrained. Students' response to the next activities constitutes might be viewed as an example of this argument.

Students' participation in the project required students to use their process-folios (which had been introduced and given to the students from the previous lesson). Eleven out of sixteen students did not bring their process-folios, despite the fact that, in the previous lesson, we had discussed the reasons for recording these learning experiences in a process-folio. Some of the students said that they forgot it, whereas others explained to me:

Male student, theatre-direction: This recording thing is not how we understand theatre. It is not what we are used to.

Myrto: To what you are used?

³¹ Self in the collective sense in Castoriadis political context.

Male student: Freedom, Miss. We don't like notebooks in the arts!³²

Female student (dance-direction): Because you record the things that will not like enough in order to remember. When you want to learn something. ... If we make something artistic, our feelings will be our records.

Myrto: As I explained to you in the previous lesson, apart from the artistic side of this experience, this is also a way for us to learn. So we need to record the process, for all of us to have our personal resources to reflect and discuss what our common experience.

Male student (theatre-direction): [Possibly referring to the explanation I gave them in the previous lesson about the importance for me to have their own perspectives for the project.] Don't worry Miss, interpret it as you want. We trust you. [Laugh.]

Many students: [Laugh.]

The fifth activity focused on the dialogue between Ismene and Antigone. Students were required to read and discuss the abstract in pairs. We then discussed the possible meanings of the abstract in the circle and students went back to their pairs. Their task was to decide and write down on a piece of paper which, according to them, is the most representative phrase of Antigone's argument about Creon's decisions, as well as the relevant phrase for Ismene's attitude. Next, the papers with the chosen phrases were mixed up in order for each pair of students to perform phrases that were chosen by other classmates (See appendix eight, activity five). When participants realised that they would not present their chosen phrases, they told me that "this is not

³² The underlining parts constitute the recurring contents/ideas of the dialogue which, in the subsequent content analysis of this lesson, conducted me to construct indigenous codes.

right” (female student, theatre-direction), or that “this is not fair” (male student, fine arts-direction).

Myrto: Fair? In which sense, is it not fair?

Female Student, theatre-direction: Because I might have chosen a better phrase. More passionate and more theatrical ... Whereas I don’t like the one I got. ... It is boring. [Smiles.]

Male Student (theatre-direction): And it is not only bad for us [students from the theatre-direction]. It is not fair for the others. Because they might not know how to play a phrase that we chose.

Female Student (dance-direction): And generally, Miss ... the others’ words might not match our feeling.

Myrto: If you find your way to connect with them, they might enrich your feeling.

Male student (dance-direction): ... Noooo. I don’t agree. This destroys your impulse and your feeling. This does not let your talent conduct you. And in arts, ... you know ... your talent conducts you.

Myrto [addressing the classroom]: Do you agree? Does the talent conduct you?

Female student (fine arts-direction): Yes. Because sometimes the talent, if you have it in the specific art, will make the difference.

Myrto: The rest of you? Do you agree?

Many students: Yes. ...

Many students: I do.

[Many positive answers.]

Myrto: What is talent?

Male student (dance-direction): The expression of your feeling ... the form of your feeling.

Female student (theatre-direction): Your instinct, Miss.

Female student (fine arts-direction): Something intangible, Miss. You cannot say that it is this or that. Is what brought us here.

Female student (dance-direction): Yes, Miss. What enabled us to pass the exams. And what might take us to an arts career.

Female student (theatre-direction): ... and generally, Miss, because we are artists ... we have this thing ... sometimes ... we want to get away from the givens of the exercise.

Finally, during our last activity students had to present in groups a reason why Creon decided not to bury Polynices, in a mode where each group additionally had to comment on its preceding group's performance (See appendix eight, activity seven). Two groups presented this as an arbitrary decision that derives from the power of the monarch; one group presented an improvisation in which Creon's decision was an exemplary one, and a way to demonstrate to the other citizens the bad consequences of someone who acts against the polis; however, the last group did not present anything because the students had a strong disagreement. I had no personal contact with this group because, during this exercise, I was busy facilitating another group; however, Ms Potamouxi explained to me that the disagreement of this group did not lie in their idea's content, but the way it ought to be performed. At the same time, one of the group's

members explained to me that “[o]ur inspirations for the specific subject did not match” (male student, fine arts-direction).

There is one last observation that would be useful to make with regards to this last activity. This final activity re-positioned the focus on the political themes of the play, but this time these themes were not in the direct interests of the participants (“because now we have to ‘go with’ the authority”, male student, theatre-direction). The students – whose participation was more active in a previous politically-oriented activity – were the only interpreters of this improvisation. Whereas each group was entitled to interpret the improvisation of the previous group, the specific students monopolised the discussion while their classmates did not respond to the opportunities to talk. For this reason, I asked some students to share their opinion with us. In this context, some of the students agreed with one participant’s answer that “this subject is not so much in our interest”, while other students cited lack of knowledge of the specific theme. One of the students said:

Female student (dance-direction): I agree with George [pseudonym] because I believe that he is more alert in these situations.

Myrto: Which situations? Of being in authority?

[Students laugh.]

Female student (theatre-direction): No ... in the level of information. He is in a youth association of a political party.

Myrto: What does this mean? You might have a different opinion from the ideology of this party.

Female student (dance direction): Yes, but he is more ... ‘organised’,³³ Miss.

He is the expert.

4.2.4 A Critical Reflection

Based on the data presented above, it is therefore argued that overall, students viewed arts as a field of “expression of feeling” (see underlined concepts in the dialogue presented above). At the same time, this expression of feeling was connected to the notion of “talent” which was, in turn, determinant for their self-realisation as artists, and for self-perception as exceptional individuals.

In a historical review, it is observed that German Romanticism was the first school of thought that established and idealised the idea of artist as a “spontaneous genius” (Berlin, 2000, p.6). Since German Romanticism was influenced by the oeuvre of Immanuel Kant – for whom the work of art is a product of genius in the sense of a self-generating nature, and so cannot be analysed in canons and reconstructed, since it is the cannon of itself – the Romantic conception of arts removed the emphasis from the *pure reason* and the artistic norms that characterised neo-classicism, and placed it on the subject’s inner life, free expression and emotion (Berlin, 2000; Smith, 2002). The Romantic principles abolished the restrictions of the arts canon and, hence, liberated the ability of the individual to become creator of worlds and universes (Berlin, 2000). In this context, the lasting effects of the Romantic perception of the artist had a particularly positive impact on the evolution of arts, because they encouraged the individual’s autonomy and the individual’s creative possibilities (*ibid.*). However, as Berlin notes, all these movements that begin as liberators in their era might also become forms of despotism for different historical periods and contexts (*ibid.*, p.3).

³³ This expression is used when we want to emphasise the systematic participation, involvement in an association, or in a social practice.

The Catholic circumvention of rules – and, therefore, of a method – donated to talent an enigmatic and mysterious quality, an “unfathomable” element which denied the artist the possibility to ‘learn’ or ‘reach’ it. This conception of the artist as a charismatic individual with a difference in *kind* rather than in *degree* privileged the individuals who ‘own’ it, and disadvantaged the individuals who want it (Sennett, 2003, p.74). This means that the denial of any kind of apprenticeship provided the talented artist with a sense of power in terms of ability that distinguished them from the mere individual. This undeterminable and arbitrary quality of the artist enabled them to be viewed as an exceptional individual whose exceptionality is, *sine qua non*, given or not (Sennett, 2003). In this context, the Romantic artist was conceived as an individual isolated in his small room from society, from people, who “follows his inner light” away from the vulgar “market”; not in order to “please” a bigger or even a smaller expert audience, but to serve “beauty” (Berlin, 2000, pp.43-44). This isolation of art and artist from the processes of society, and especially the political and economical ones, was a core approach that excluded people from both the ruling German Courts and the simple “uncultivated” people German Romantic artists imposed as an absolute maxim of art making (Elias, 1997). This attitude was to be inscribed in the collective unconscious via their French colleagues a little later, παραγκωνισμένοι in their turn from the bourgeois society and the capitalist market of the nineteenth century (Jones, 1984).

It can be argued that this model involves certain issues, or even impediments, for an ensemble theatre-learning process, because it entails a *modus operandi* that discourages the egalitarian conditions of co-creation, as well as its connection with social matters and procedures. The emphasis on the exceptionality of the individual feeling and talent restricts students from establishing dialogic modes of **participation**, legitimates repetitive and unprogressive artistic repertoires (**theatre/artistic**

ability/literacy), and permits self-centered social patterns (**ensemble ability**). In sum, it denies participants' individual and collective progression both in artistic and social ability.

As Kathleen Gallagher argues, some of the students' own self-conceptions or narratives – and certain strategic identities – afford them a kind of power, or freedom, in the classroom dynamic, not to learn (Gallagher, 2010, p.19). On this matter, Giroux argues that a critical pedagogy should not “simply affirm the stories that students tell, nor [...] simply glorify the possibility for narration” (Giroux, 1992, p.80). By contrast, it should be equally preoccupied with raising the level of students' consciousness, so that they understand how their personal narratives are also embedded in wider social and political narratives (*ibid.*).

Finally, as a consequence, an inconsistency arose. Students declared their faith in democracy and in the need for citizens to stand up for their rights so that collective, egalitarian and critical democratic institutions – such as elections, for example – could have “meaning”. But they also held aforesaid beliefs and practices concerning theatre – something collaborative and directed towards society. This should be interpreted again through the perception of art in an individualistic dimension that limits it to self-expression and talent, and, consequently, to itself and its experts. In other words, the political consciousness of the students seemed isolated from their artistic consciousness. And while the students themselves realized their limited acting against the conflicting interests of authority, they considered themselves experts in art, which was though/in turn restricted in the notion of talent. It should be noted that this “isolation” of art and over-estimation of talent was particularly enhanced by the educational environment which treated them as “talented artists” (and legitimated lower performance in the

official module). A further parameter that can be viewed as correlated to this perception of arts lies in the separation between the arts and the official curriculum.

From this perspective, the “intra-aesthetic” (Neelands, 2004, p.50) and self-referential *modus operandi* of theatre/arts could be interrogated by an ensemble model that would aspire to connect theatre/arts with students’ political interest, and, possibly alter the one-sided perception of arts and politics as separate domains of expertise. In other words, the marginalisation of arts in an apolitical realm restricts their educational potential. Martha Nussbaum, Eliot Eisner, Maxine Green *inter alia*, view arts education as a means to practise empathy (Nussbaum, 2010), develop imagination (Eisner, 2005, p.83) or, ‘think big’, for a wide spectrum of human issues (Greene, 2000, p.10). Therefore, the ensemble theatrical exploration of *Antigone* could possibly provide theatre learning with connections to these ‘bigger’ issues of students’ lives.

4.2.5 An Overall Re-planning: New Foci on Existing Practices

In order to address the above analysed artistic and educational context, the emphasis of re-planning on the inter-aesthetic (Neelands, 2004, p.51), and integrated conceptual ground of ensemble-based learning in drama. This was done in order to suggest a more active role for arts to play, both within the school curriculum, and the students’ social lives. This ensemble-based learning model for theatre/arts education would be realised through more tangible practices than application of talent; would bear potential to encourage multiple ways of contribution, aside from the “expression of feeling”; and would connect arts with life by providing the classroom with dimensions of a

real-world space continuous with the world outside – a place where real problems are debated, real practical skills evolved.
(Dewey cited in Nussbaum, 2010, pp.65-66)

For this reason, the following ensemble-based learning was re-planned in order to re-frame the theatre practice in the classroom. The context of *Ancient Greek Learning* was also a determinant factor in the overall process, and, respectively, indicated further exploration of abstracts of the text and analysis, which could entail deeper comprehension not only of *Antigone*, but of the procedure of interpreting texts in general as well. In the first place, a greater emphasis was placed on the “apprenticeship model” (Neelands, 2008) in order to coordinate students’ participation in theatre and provide them with more “structured and engaging stimulus” (Winston, 2010, p.93). In this reframed context, where theatre becomes “a means of communication” (*ibid.*, p.97), the abstract notion of talent is replaced by a “vocabulary that children can practice and learn” (*ibid.*).

Along the same line of reasoning, a more integrated approach to arts/theatre that used “the full range of symbolic languages” of theatre – from music and poetry to scenery and video-arts – was re-emphasised by the structure of the lessons in order to enhance students’ level and type of contribution (Dickinson and Neelands, 2006, p.119). This decision also aimed to introduce the principle of *isos phronein* by engaging the different “strengths of students in different domains of ability” and by valuing the contributions of students who originated from the fine arts or the dance-direction (*ibid.*, p.118). This endeavour also focused on broadening the theatrical/artistic creations of students and integrating them with a wider socio-political potential of creation. In this context, two more pedagogic actions were undertaken in order to “address and enrich both the academic curriculum and the broader curriculum” (*ibid.*, p.3), and to bridge the theatre learning and political development.

In the first place, the *political issues* of the text were explored through a range of drama activities and conventions; these would either emphasise the diachronic nature of

some of the text's subjects, or would make clearer connections to contemporary politics (See, for example, appendix nine, activity seven).

Second, the potential of drama in a *cross-curricular* basis was attempted, in more explicit and systematic ways. I divided our workshops according to the episodes of the play that are taught in the context of the official curriculum, and I invited the philologist to indicate the parts of the text with which students have difficulties, or areas of meaning that remain superficially explored by the official curriculum. Moreover, I encouraged the philologist to use drama's "transferable pedagogy" that could improve the effectiveness of her own teaching, through suggesting her activities for the parts of the text that I would not have the time to explore in the period of six lessons (Dickinson and Neelands, 2006, p.3). Finally, I invited teachers from other arts-directions to attend our classes, to examine how respective issues could be explored in their modules and contribute to the process (*ibid.*, p.2).

4.2.6 "Ensemble-based theatre Learning" as Politicisation and Democratisation of the Arts Curriculum

Before analysing the data from following lessons, it is worth noting that during the third lesson, one of the students who initially refused to be video-recorded told me he had changed his mind. I informed the other two students about their classmate's decision, and I asked them to let me know if they changed their minds. At the end of the lesson, they both agreed to be video-recorded; we agreed that if they felt uncomfortable we would stop it. In this context, both the philologist and two other students – who were interested in recording moments of the lessons – were allowed by the rest of the group to bring their cameras and take some pictures.

4.2.6.1 Ensemble Theatre as a Frame of Equal Participation: New Perceptions of Arts and Self

It is argued that the inclusive approach to drama demanded different modes of participation and legitimised different types of literacy; this enabled students to democratise their **participation** and broaden their **perception of arts**. It enabled them to become less concerned with expressing their feelings and to access the process through the use of various competencies, not only through individual talent in expressivity. In this context, students from the theatre-direction realised that some students from the fine art-directions might have made more analytic or accurate interpretations of their performances; or, they might be more argumentative in explaining “*exactly* what we tried to do” (19/10/2009, female student, theatre-direction, my emphasis according to her voice intonation; 1.5, 2.1).

Along the same line of reasoning, a student from the theatre-direction asked one of his classmates from the dance-direction to participate in the improvisation he directed. He did so because “she is better in sustaining an intense pause in a difficult position” (19/10/2009; 1.5, 2.1, 3.2). Respectively, students from other arts-directions started to appreciate the role they could play in the theatre-making process. Participants from the fine arts-direction started to bring pictures that “could improve our still images. Wake up our imagination a bit”, or started to design the “un-played moments of the play” (female student, See paintings in appendix twelve, 12/10/2009; 1.2, 3.3). During the final, reflective interview, a female student from the theatre-direction, while talking about her own, subjective way of experiencing this process, described some key moments that were important for her. She said that

the most surprising thing was that some of our classmates worked with all of us towards the end of this [project]. I don’t mean, generally, other students that had never done theatre. I am

talking about students of whom the voice was *never* heard in classroom. Honestly, Miss, there are students ... I mean ... we are five years with them [in the same classroom] – I won't say names – and I would never expect to see them sitting in the circle and try things out. (See appendix fourteen: Final interview 16/11/2009, my emphasis according to her voice intonation, 1.1, 2.5)

The increased value that was given to different skills – which were initially unconnected to theatre in students' **perception of arts** – enabled participants from different arts-directions to find an 'occupation', and be included in the process. "[H]aving a particular 'occupation'", Ranciere argues, "determines the ability or inability to take charge of what is common to the community" (2004, p.12). Therefore, the increase of 'occupations' facilitated different members of the ensemble to speak and undertake action in the groups' commons (*ta koina*) (See section 2.1.5).

The new model for theatre/arts making – apart from increased equality in **participation** – brought to the cooperation of the ensemble a new dimension of trust. Throughout the project, participants started to appreciate the various contributions that were made by students with different 'occupations' (Nicholson, 2002). In other words, they started to trust each other through trusting their different strengths. Helene Nicholson argues that trust "involves a correspondence between belief and expectation" (2002, p.82). Trust, in this case, was developed through the *practising* of *isonomic participation* and *isegoric* communication. Therefore, trust did not remain only a sentiment, but became a "visible enactment", manifested in students' actions and theatrical performances (*ibid.*, p.84). In recapitulation, it can be argued that students' **perception of arts/theatre** was widened and, hence, students' **self-perception as artists** was diversified according to the renewed standards of **participation**. Second – as will be

analysed in the following section – this alteration of arts’ perception, and of self as artist, initiated not only new standards of **participation**, but also challenged the previous standards of achievement by suggesting new criteria of conceiving and evaluating theatrical achievement (**theatre ability/literacy**).

4.2.6.2 Apprenticeship Model: Informing talent with Craft

The conduct of the lessons, according to the conventions-“apprenticeship model” (See section 2.3.2) that my conception of ensemble is informed by, constituted a differentiating factor for the students’ **theatre ability/literacy**. In turn, this differentiation contributed to students’ reconsidered **perception of arts**, while it also functioned progressively for students’ artistic autonomy. This is viewed by Castoriadis’ political theory as an interactive factor to self-instituting ability. Developing a theory for *Respect, in a world of inequality*, Richard Sennett argues that although mastery is a form of public recognition and social honour, craftwork entailing the apprenticeship of skills enables the internal setting of critical standards. “Craftwork certainly does not banish invidious comparison to the work of others,” writes Sennett. “[I]t does refocus a person’s energies, however, to getting an act right in itself, for oneself” (Sennett, 2003, p.98-99). In the same context, Sennett also cautions the risk of isolation that this process might entail (2003). It should be acknowledged that this sense of the *act right in itself* might look contradictory in the communicative context of theatre-making. However, it is argued that, in the context of a *learning* enterprise in theatre, the absence of any sense of craft, method, technique or form could also limit and exclude the students’ entitlement to be makers of theatre. In the context of Kress’ theory of social literacy, the form – the available means that someone has in order to express herself – is not just the bearer or the carrier of meaning, because it determines the range of choices on which individuals rely (1994, p.200). In the context of theatre learning, there is a need to bridge

spontaneous and innate uses of theatre with the more poetic conventions of performance craft (1990, p.5); this is in order to provide young people with the means to formulate their expressive possibilities (Fleming, 2001), and to perform successfully what they imagined on the open space of the theatre stage.

The apprenticeship model of this project gradually introduced participants to a range of conventions – of which the theatrical use was reflected after the activity’s end – in order to facilitate students to understand, decide and manage the theatre mediums and hence to incorporate them in their creations. The majority of participants from dance- and fine arts-directions incorporated more quickly the “theatrical tricks” (student, fine arts-direction, 19/10/2009) with which the lesson provided them; after our second meeting, they started to ask me whether they could “do this slow-motion thing that we did the previous time”, or if they could do “this character who moves while other people perform his inner thoughts” (2/11/2009). Along that line of thought, after the third lesson, students from directions other than theatre asked me at the end of the lesson if our next lesson would be:

Student (dance-direction): ... [t]his kind of theatre?

Myrto: What do you mean?

Student (dance-direction): This. As we did it today. ... [W]hen we don’t need just to start acting. When you give us an idea ... how can I say it ... when we have to think about something specific.

Myrto: Yes, but towards the end you will need to create your own versions of the story, and then you will have to work on your own idea of what to do.

Student (fine arts-direction): What do you mean towards the end? Because you know, this is better for us. Because, you see, we have something to start.

That's why we can do it. Otherwise, we couldn't. That's what I think.
(12/10/2009).

Some students from the theatre-direction gradually started to realise that the actor needs “a creative leap”, a method – a “school”, in Brook's terms (1990, p.34, 57) – to enable his/her creations to present more precisely the chosen meanings (Kress, 1994, p.202). One student, responding to one of his classmates' improvisations, argued that:

[T]his thing that we do. ... To put at the back of our improvisation what is going on inside the character is very good, I think. Not only for this exercise. Generally, it can make it really powerful, I think. Because it ... it creates, it creates contradiction, and it creates an atmosphere. (female student, dance-direction 2/11/2009; See appendix nine, activity three)

In the final activity of the sixth lesson, three out of four groups made use of one of the conventions that had been previously employed. One group incorporated “voices in the head”, the other the background, and the third the collective character. One of the girls, commenting on another group's improvisation, noted that

the way they put the ‘collective character’ was very impressive ... [b]ecause they didn't ‘do’ the collective character. It was, like, real. It was like Creon is all the authorities together. So powerful, like he really has all these people inside him.
(16/11/2009)

The impact of this apprenticeship model became more obvious to them when they started to draw upon it in order to structure their improvisations or presentations.

Towards our final lessons, students could draw upon this new repertoire for their own devised improvisations and performances. For example, during the second

lesson (5/10/2009), one activity required students to read in pairs some of the initial dialogue between Ismene and Antigone, and to present them through a psychological gesture that characterises each heroine. The majority of the students' gestures represented Antigone in a very dynamic way, which celebrated her decision to bury her brother. At the same moment, I asked the students to work in groups of four in order to present both the heroines and their "alter-ego: (Neelands and Goode, 2000, p.47). In their second presentation, the alter-ego of Antigone expressed her disappointment over her sister's refusal to help her. After the students' presentations, I asked them to compare their first and second performances. Some students argued that in the second image, we could see a more humanised presentation of the heroine because we could see that "Antigone has feelings" (male student, dance-direction, 5/10/2009), and that "she is also hurt sometimes" (female student, fine arts-direction, 5/10/2009).

Myrto: Why do we need to see this other side of her? Why is it useful to us?

Male student (dance-direction): Because otherwise, she would always be angry and ... always stubborn ... you know.

Female student (theatre-direction): And this is boring. Whereas here, it's more ... more complete? I don't know.

Male student (dance-direction): She is more human, Miss. We understand her better. And ... we want to understand her better in order to present her better.

Myrto: So, how did you create this nuance? How did you present her better?

Male student: By enacting her feelings.

Myrto: Is there any other hero who would be better presented if you enacted his/her feelings?

Female student (fine arts-direction): Ismene. Because she might have second thoughts about her decision.

Myrto: In our further work, if you think that for any other hero needs to be presented ‘with his second thoughts’, you can try to show us these thoughts.

(5/10/2009)

During the final lesson (16/11/2009), students were required to make the psychological gestures of Creon and Antigone as these evolved over the course of the play. In this context, eight out of eleven couples attempted to present not only the heroes’ explicit gestures but also used their *alter-egos*. One couple, for example, after presenting the ways in which each hero is perceived by the other, also performed the feelings of each hero that are ignored by the other. In this context, after showing Creon to exercise his power violently, they also presented him as devastated, owing to an honest concern to be a good governor.

During the final interview, one of the participants said that he preferred

“the theatrical techniques we learnt and, now, we can use them differently. As we want. We have points to start, if we are stuck somewhere” (16/11/2009)

students’ removal from the landscape of self-expression, and their progressive familiarisation with a range of theatrical conventions, enabled them to make more complete meanings of the stages of each task: to be more confident; to acquire greater ability/literacy; and to gain greater autonomy as a learning and artistic ensemble (Dickinson and Neelands, 2006).

Despite the positive effects that the apprenticeship model had for the majority of the participants, in some cases – mainly for the students from the theatre-direction it constituted a limitation. There was a range of students who disagreed with this approach

to theatre. In some cases students felt constrained by the structured quality of the work, and they noted that “the activities are very specific” (female student, theatre-direction 19/10/2009). From this perspective, it can be argued that my attempt to include students from different arts-directions in the theatre-making process might have restricted the theatrical habitus of some other students who were more interested in developing their acting skills.

4.2.6.3 Ensemble Perceptions of Arts and Self

To sum up, it is argued that students’ familiarisation with an ensemble model of theatre-making functioned positively for students’ **ensemble ability** on two (interdependent) levels. The first level concerns the dialogic and inclusive dimensions it ascribed to the process of theatre-making; the second level refers to the self-instituting possibilities that the group discovered as an artistic ensemble.

a) The Dialogic Impact

The modified **perception of theatre/arts** precluded students from defining and evaluating themselves according to their individual performances, and placed the emphasis on the collective performance instead. The achievement necessitated a dialogic process of construction and realisation. This upgrade of the ‘collective endeavour’ in students’ consciousness was made possible through the realisation that their self-interest – namely, to do a ‘good’ presentation – presupposes the inclusion of the others in the intellectual, emotional or physical level (Winston, 2004, p.53). Hence, students started to “sacrifice their immediate self-interest for the good of a shared enterprise” (*ibid.*).

Sennett, arguing about the essentialism of collaboration in contemporary societies, claims that cooperation does not only constitute an ethical, self-standing value (2012, p.5). However, the systematic and practical collaborative activity is essential for

the development of collaborative ability and the realisation of its beneficial impact in theatre-/arts-making (2012). Drawing upon an example from classical music, he makes a parallel between the listening skills in music and the listening skills in a dialogic act. In this context, he argues that, although practising might be a solitary experience, rehearsal is a collaborative one, *par excellence*. It shows how the sharing of intuition among colleagues will enable them to co-create, as well as to develop their own skills. Homogeneity, he argues, is a dull, rather than creative, recipe for performative arts. It is in this realisation that the musician evolves as an artist; and, it is in this realisation that individuals genuinely appreciate the value of collaboration, and become cooperative creatures (*ibid.*, p. 14, 16). Therefore, the achievement of cooperation can be neither suggested nor imposed; rather, it is built from the ground up, from the very essence of the artistic endeavour.

In an analogous process, the students of this classroom – especially those from the theatre-direction -- when viewing the beneficial effect of cooperation to the construction and the performance of the symbolic reality, thereby realised the significance of collective creation from their own experience – from the “ground up”, in Sennett’s words (*ibid.*, p.16). One of the activities of the sixth lesson demanded that the students imagine the feelings of Creon that Antigone ignores; similarly, it demanded that they imagine the feelings of Antigone that Creon disregards, and present them both through a sequence of psychological gestures. During their preparation, the pairs who were ready invited me to view their work. In this example, three students from different pairs informed me that their initial gestures were different, but that they changed them in order to respond more powerfully to the other member of the pair. For instance, one student explained to me that

this gesture might seem more ‘general’ [rather than specific], but fits better with [my partner] Eleni’s [pseudonym] choice. This makes the whole picture better. So we wanted to make the whole thing strong. ... [Y]ou know. Not each gesture, because this doesn’t really work. (Male student, dance-direction, 2/11/2009; 3.1, 3.2; See appendix nine, activity five)

b) Self-instituting Possibilities

The dialogic dimensions of cooperation (**ensemble ability**; 2) combined with the increasing autonomy of the group as an artistic ensemble (**theatre ability/literacy**), brought greater autonomy and self-instituting possibilities. After our third lesson, students stopped expecting or demanding my intervention during their group work. Instead, they started to take over the instituting and corrective action by themselves (Bruner, 1974, p.53). In this way, they found methods: to solve their differences during the group work (2.2); to respond to and be influenced by each others’ work (2.4); and to take time for whole class discussion and reflection at their own pace, and according to the needs or the issues that the process generated (4.1, 4.2). After the end of an improvisation, a student interpreting another’s group work said:

Student (arts-direction): I think that I saw Creon, preparing himself for his public speech. But he needed ... a kind of support ... and because he didn’t have it from someone else it was like he was re-structuring ... I don’t know ... reorganising himself for this. (19/10/09)

Student (theatre-direction) [who played a part in this improvisation]: It was more like he was wearing a mask. Not like ... [I] want[ed] to become something else, more like [I] want[ed] to present myself differently. [Addressing the whole group] ... not obvious?

Students: No.

Other students: Not so much ...

Student (theatre-direction): Maybe you have to find a way to show that he wanted to deceive the public. Because the way you did it was like he is unprotected.

Student (theatre-direction): Maybe because his initial position was small, was ... confined.

Student theatre-direction [participant in the improvisation]: OK, give us a minute to re-try it. (2.4, 4.2)

The second time, students presented Creon 'bigger' and confident, re-structuring himself in a more narcissistic way.

Student (dance-direction): Yes this is clear. This is like, I want to hide things and ... want to be an obscure reality.

In the same way, during our final interview, one student explained that

normally, there are disagreements we have in the lessons. I mean, in the arts lessons. Because in the other lessons ... [laugh] ... we don't care that much to disagree. But in our arts-direction ... there are disagreements. This time we solved some disagreements by ourselves. You know what I mean ... you didn't come to explain blah blah blah ... and show what is right (2.2). We had to think by ourselves who is right, because then the presentation should be supported by all of us (3.1). So, you know, we had to think carefully what is better and ... go ahead! (4.1) (19/10/2009)

From this perspective, it is observed that the group started to recognise its self-instituting possibilities, to take advantage of them; while, at the same time, they started to undertake the responsibility of this self-institution (Neelands, 2008).

4.2.6.4 Performing *Antigone*: as a Means of Political Practice

Owing to the dialogic and enacted character of theatrical communication and to the rich political problematisations of the play, students were provided with an opportunity to access political “processes inaccessible in everyday life” (Bennett, 1997, p.105), connect artistic and political interests, and experience holistically a miniature of actual politics (Neelands, 2009a). The performed way of reflecting, communicating and debating *Antigone*’s political issues – such as the tension between the public and the private, the boundaries between rights and duties in a democracy, or the reasons and the motives that ascribe legitimacy to human actions – enabled students to gain practical insight for the complexity of democratic politics and the essentiality of *isos phronein*. This experience became a common resource for the group, in addition to becoming an individual experience for each student. The simplistic interpretations of the text gave way to nuanced performances. At the end of the process, whereas participants defended Antigone’s or Creon’s ideas, they recognised lack of phronesis by both heroes. These multiperspectival performances of the play, aside from their interpretive and theatrical value – have significant political implications because they constitute essential abilities for *citizenization* (Tully, 2004, p.99). Students’ gradual empathy towards both heroes – contrasted with their initial sympathy for Antigone – manifests a dialogic reasoning. Sennett’s approach to the notions of sympathy and empathy views the former as an emotional process and the latter as a more dialogic endeavour. In this context, he argues that

[B]oth sympathy and empathy convey recognition, and both forge a bond, but the one is embrace, the other an encounter. Sympathy overcomes differences through imaginative acts of identification; empathy attends to another person on his or her own terms. Sympathy has usually been thought a stronger sentiment than empathy, because ‘I feel your pain’ puts the stress on what I feel; it activates one’s own ego. Empathy is a more demanding exercise, at least in listening; the listener has to get outside him- or herself. (2012, p.21).

Whereas theatre as an educational process involves the development of both empathy and sympathy– which can be according to the case of equal importance – students’ participation in the multiple forms of *agon* that the play involves provides them with a practical experience of political argumentation.

At the very beginning, the majority of the students believed that “Antigone is brave” (5/10); in the middle of the project, they believed that “she is afraid of nothing” (19/10); and at the end of the project, that the heroine

was very dedicated to what she decided. Right or not. She wants to complete it. But she is stubborn like him. (2/11/2009, quotes from the same student, fine arts-direction; See appendix nine, activity six)

Logically, therefore, during their improvisations, a certain number of students used the following phrases as synonymous: “the eternal laws”, “the divine laws”, “the unwritten laws” and “the moral laws” (quotes from different students, mixed arts-directions). During our fifth lesson (2/11/2009), one of these students discussed publicly that “the word moral is not written in the text”, and that “sometimes religion is viewed as morality. But we saw that it is not the same” (female student, arts-direction). By the same token, at the beginning of the lesson, “Antigone was the only one who ‘paid’ for

her illegal action, while Creon didn't lose his life" (5/10). In a later stage of the project, during an interpretation of another group's still-image, a student explained that

[h]ere we view his punishment. He was also punished. ... He was ... I think that we cannot compare the punishments. The end is tragic for both. (female student, theatre-direction) (02/11/09)

This symbolic public sphere that was based on the themes of the play, but which equally 'accommodated' students' political positions for religion, loyalty, and protest, functioned for the group as a political arena that was constructed to bring issues of value and conflict to the fore (Winston, 2004, p.51). This political practice is symbiotic with the ensemble context that framed it; it should not be viewed as a self-evident result of any theatrical exploration of *Antigone*. The social process towards **ensemble ability** and **self-instituting** skills functioned inter-complementarily with students' social imagination in the symbolic level.

In a sense, the actual world informed the fictional world and, in turn, the fictional world inspired the actual world, for they are not separate cognitive categories (Gallagher, 2002, p.120; Courtney, 1990 in Gallagher, 2000, p.120). The dialogic practices and the collective endeavours that students experienced on a real level created an appropriate context for students to reflect collectively on the democratic *impasses* that the play presents. At the same time, the political conflict between the two heroes provided stimuli for reflection of the complexities that a democratic way of living demands. The *overall* experience contributed to the meaning that students made for conflict, politics and *isos phronein*.

In the final interview, one student explained that

the weirdest thing ... was ... the way the story 'spoke' for us ...
I mean ... this lack of communication that took place between

the heroes, we thought of it as Creon's fault. ... and I hated Creon ... And this thing ... we do it in real life. Like between us. We did it at the beginning, in the lesson. When everybody wanted to play his thought. We did it in the play. We did not want to see the play differently. ... You know ... sometimes we think we do dialogue, but we do not listen. ... like Creon ... and like Antigone. And this was weird in the lesson because the fanaticism disappeared somehow. ... you know ... because we saw the story differently (female student, fine arts-direction, 16/11/09; See appendix fourteen)

Along the same lines, another student said that:

Male student (theatre-direction): All these things that we did were good for us, Miss. ...To realise things for ourselves. Because sometimes we think we are different to what we are ... (16/11/09; See appendix fourteen)

Female student (theatre-direction): [Interrupting] Aaa! And you know, Miss, what I wanted to say! We always hear at the school that we have to 'see things from different perspectives' and 'see things from different perspectives, and 'see things from different perspectives'. If you can imagine, we listen to that, in all the lessons, Miss! But it was the first time I understood what we mean by 'to see things from different perspectives'. [decisively] To understand that apart from what we think as right, there is something else! (*ibid.*)

From this point of view, it is argued that these connections that students made to their own lives enabled them to make further connections to the wider world and develop collective initiatives. This was done in order to ascribe a more public nature to the process (Hughes and Wilson, 2004).

4.2.6.5 Self-instituting Actions and Communal Dimensions

The overall experience gradually encouraged for students to “value the opportunity to invest their skills and imagination in the creative process”, and to develop further initiative to “see their own ideas realized through the development of projects” (*ibid.*, p.63). Students experiencing a kind of political practice and realising the arts’ potential to engage them with the wider sphere of political becoming developed a more active **political consciousness** and further **self-instituting ability**. The students from the fine arts-direction organised a painting exhibition with their teacher, which examined the theme of conflict (November, 2009; 4.1) (for students’ preparation, see appendix twelve). Three students from the dance-direction worked independently and devised a choreography based on the encounter of Creon and Antigone (4.1). Aside from the presentation of the choreography in the context of our lessons, the students presented the specific piece of work in the Second Week of Greek Tragedy (22-27 February, 2010; 4.1). With the help of the Director of the school, and with the supervision of their philologist, students presented part of our work to the Juvenile Prisons as a means of reflecting with young people from another civil context on the issues of authority and loyalty in a democratic polis (19/10/2009; 4.2).

These actions can be viewed in relation to Castoriadis’ argument, that whereas individuals act within institutions their collective actions tend to re-institute or recreate them, at the same time. Although the ensemble model for theatre-making provided the group with an innovative ‘institution’ for arts participation and theatre-making, students’ further communicative and gradually self-instituting actions gave this learning model further dimensions and possibilities of development.

It is also useful to note that the positive impact of the project was extended across the curriculum, influenced the philologist’s practice, and was considered worthy to be

presented as an alternative teaching for Ancient Greek Poetry and Grammatology for teachers' training by the Responsible Director of Philological Modules of the Schools of East Attica. After the second lesson of the project, Mrs Karampetsou started to incorporate activities of the process in the ordinary lesson of Ancient Greek, and observed that students' participation and response was particularly developed both in terms of motivation and achievement. At the end of the project, she was convinced that the specific approach to Ancient Greek language is beneficial for the evolution of the lesson, students' response and achievement (See appendix thirteen) This lies mainly in students' engagement and positive response to a model of learning that demands their active participation and values their opinions. After the end of the project, we kept in contact with Mrs Karampetsou, who wanted to continue this approach after I left the school, but who – owing to lack of previous experience – asked for my guidance. Owing to her belief in “the change that this project brought to her ordinary life with the classroom” – and with the support of the Director of the school and the Director of Language and Literary Modules of Secondary Education of the Schools of East Attica – we organised a training for other philologists who worked in the schools of East Attica. The students agreed to facilitate us in presenting an “exemplary lesson” in which the grammatical exercises and the textual analysis interacts with the drama conventions.

In the first official exams that students passed after the completion of our project, the whole group's achievement was “higher than any other language module” – especially in the questions that concerned “interpretive analysis” (Karampetsou, 7/2/10). This observation was also affirmed by some students who agreed that one of the things that they liked more was Mrs Karampetsou incorporating “the things that we did and made the lesson more interesting ... you know ... not boring as a normal language lesson” (16/11/2009).

Chapter Five: Conclusions

Before concluding with some inferences that emerged from the data gathered in these two schools, it is essential to note that the overall claims to knowledge or re-creations in students' learning should not be viewed as absolute and fixed results in a positivistic sense. Rather, the overall discussion should be viewed in the epistemological framework of this study that confronts knowledge as a continuous dialogue between theory and practice, as a dialogue between the ideal theories of democracy in theory and the pragmatic possibilities in educational settings (See sections 3.1, 3.2). Consequently, the knowledge that students constructed should be contextualised in the experienced character of ensemble theatre knowledge, which differs from a range of other curricular knowledge (Gallagher, 2012). Greene argues that even though what is learned "cannot be stated discursively, cannot be translated into fact nor assimilated in some fund of knowledge", it is essential for the learner to see "what he may have never seen" or in a different fashion (1968, p.16). Therefore, the re-creative impact of this study on students' knowledge does not imply changes from one fixed point to another (Neelands, 2004, p.53). Rather, "the pedagogic premise is that we are in a process of continuous transforming and (re)shaping of who we are and who we are becoming", as the Castoriadian and Habermasian model of democracy suggests (*ibid.*).

Overall, it is argued that the ensemble-based process of theatre-learning evolved and functioned differently in each classroom owing to the different lifeworlds that were encountered in each educational context. This means that each educational institution entailed different factors that were structuring students' "culture", "society" and "personality" (See section 2.1.4). These factors were mirrored in narrative practices through which students understand themselves and 'organise' their self-perception as individuals and as social collectives (See section 2.1.4). The communicative process that

opened between students' narratives and the ensemble model of learning necessitated a kind of dialogic reflection that conducted the teaching project to be re-created according to the students' lifeworlds. In an analogous way, the communicative process that opened between students' narratives/self-perceptions and the ensemble theatre practices provided the students with stimuli to re-create moments of their reality. These forms of re-creation were based on the new 'institutional' framework of participation and creation.

In the case of School A, the ensemble mode of socialisation focused on the actualisation of students' agency and on the improvement of their self-perception as socio-artistic actors (See section 4.2). In the case of School B, the ensemble theatre-making was re-oriented to the development of the collective ability of the group and on the broadening of students' perception of the arts, as well as on the exploration of the politicisation possibilities of students' creations (See section 4.3).

5.1 School A

As the data manifests, in School A students were denied a range of material and educational conditions that would permit them equal "contact and opportunity in the world" (Anyon, 1980, p.71; See sections 4.1.2, 4.1.4, 4.1.5). The educational practices imposing specific forms of cultural capital while excluding other, vernacular forms of knowledge, discouraged students' artistic and social action by socialising them through a suppressive rather than an active process of participation. Therefore, students' self-perception – manifested in their narratives and lack of action – mirrored this sense of exclusion (See section 4.1.4). The imposition of "certain meanings – treated by selection and by corresponding exclusion" – as the "objective truth" of theatre, exercised in students a kind of "symbolic violence" which, culminating in the overall practices of

the school, condemned students to a culture of passivity (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977, p.8, 17). The correspondence of this negative self-image in students' political consciousness was evident in their narratives that expressed disbelief in their potential to speak and be heard, and hesitation with regards to their eligibility to act and participate. In other words, the right of citizenship was annulled in students' consciousness, since they believed that they are either ineligible or unable to participate actively in democratic politics and to play a role as social actors. This attitude is the opposite identity to the one which is promoted by democratic politics (See section 2.1). This kind of resignation from politics and social institution is correlated to the socialising experiences of students in their educational institution.

[A]spirations and demands are defined in both form and content by objective conditions which exclude the possibility of hoping for the unobtainable. (Bourdieu, 1974, p.33)

The identification of what is obtainable and unobtainable

is essentially determined by reference to the probability (judged intuitively by means of previous successes or failures) of achieving the desired. (*ibid.*, p.34-35)

This means that if the goal is, by definition, unachievable – owing to its distance from an individual's or a group's culture – both students and their general social environment “tend to discourage ambitions seen as excessive” and

everything conspires to bring back those who, as we say, ‘have no future; to ‘reasonable’ hopes (or ‘realistic ones, as Lewin calls them) and in fact, in many cases, to make them give up hope. (*ibid.*, p.35)

In correlation to the ensemble ability, the overall data revealed that this social group was characterised by a strong sense of collectiveness and by a limited sense of agency. On

this matter, the negative self-perception of this group was viewed as the explanatory link between these qualities. The *modus operandi* of the group was characterised by togetherness and sense of belonging, but was lacking any sense of initiative and action-oriented aspiration. From this perspective, whereas the democratic sense of membership permeated the mentality of the group, it was not generated by a chosen, dynamic sharing of an interest or socially imagined becoming. Rather it emerged by a shared feeling of exclusion, a commonly experience misrecognition (See section 4.1.5).

As such, the ensemble-based theatre process, instead of focusing directly on self-institution, was oriented to address its pre-condition; that is, to communicate with students' lifeworlds in order to suggest to them the socialising possibilities of the ensemble theatre that contradict their existing backgrounds. In contrast to the reproductive direction of imposed pedagogies, the ensemble theatre practices, based on the principle that students are the eligible social and artistic actors of this project attempted to open the space of participation that enable students to find the courage for public participation or, in the best case, for self-recreation.

It cannot be claimed that this process changed participants' self-perception, but it can be argued that it intervened in their lifeworlds. It did not alter the negative self-image, but it opened a space that, periodically, challenged passivity and resignation. The space which opened among the members of the group – welcoming their social and artistic actions – gave an intersubjective character in the learning experience which, in turn, gave participatory dimensions in the new process of socialisation. This re-creative experience was facilitated by three interconnected dimensions of the ensemble drama experience: the social; the public; and the symbolic levels of the theatre process.

In the social level of drama, students were required to communicate their ideas and decide by themselves which of them will be incorporated in their subsequent actions and how they will be enacted. These performance-oriented dialogues constituted the first level in which students had the opportunity to appreciate each other's ideas, to recognise their potential and to perform them. Because they lack previous experience in participatory forms of theatre-learning, this form of collaboration was an occasion for the group to explore the possibilities of their participation, its challenges and potentials. Complementarily to the groups' work in the so-called real level of drama, the public quality of students' performances constituted an additional area in which public speech and action was practised. Students provided them with further possibilities of inter-recognition and means to explore the potential of public participation (See section 4.1.8.3).

Finally, the symbolic worlds that students constructed – generated from the politics of *Antigone* – were encouraging for the group's familiarisation with active citizenship (See section 4.1.8.1; 4.1.8.3). Considering the restricted experience of students in public-sphere participation, the lessons were re-planned to focus on the practices of citizenship that the context of *Antigone* encourages. In this framework, the emphasis was placed on students' performances as members of the polis who are entitled to reflect on the public events, and to influence the evolution of the story. This experience 'de-mystified' the practices of citizenization and made them more accessible in participants' political consciousness. Therefore, the imagined experience simplified the practices of public sphere and permitted the students to reconsider the extent of their ability within it, and hence their self-worth as its members (Winston, 2010, p.79)

Nevertheless, alongside the positive dimensions that this project brought to the school experience of the students, a range of aims was not achieved. These concerned

new, contextual issues to be fore-grounded in the process. The lack of essential pre-conditions for theatre-making and active participation rendered the development of students' dramatic literacy and of self-instituting abilities singular incidences, rather than recurring contents in students' theatrical and social actions. This does not mean that these moments were not recognised as valuable when they happened (*ibid.*), but, that their occurrence was not systematic and did not characterise the majority of students' achievement.

Apart from these limitations, a further problematisation derived from the overall restriction of the project by the school environment. This restriction entails impediments to the legitimisation of this learning process in students' consciousness. This means that if the participatory possibilities of this learning process cannot be incorporated by the official curriculum and if they remain a parenthetical activity, the knowledge constructed in this process cannot be viewed as a true, alternative possibility.

For instance, the five workshops that this project included can neither be powerful enough to question the overall school experience, nor to acquire a legitimate position in students' consciousness. Although students took advantage of this learning experience, it is doubted whether this will become a resource for further exploration or a sidelined experience in the, already, sidelined module of theatre. Our final encounter being 'stigmatised' by the prohibition of students' performances in other classes can be viewed as a symbol of the overall restriction that the process faced in the context of the specific school (See section 4.2.8). It can also be viewed as a sign for the aforesaid parenthetical function.

5.2 School B

The evolution of the project in the case of the School B was determined by a range of parameters that differ significantly from those encountered in the first one. In this context, the research project functioned as an introductory process to the module of *Ancient Greek Poetry and Literature: Sophocles' Antigone* in an Arts High School. The fact that the project was not accommodated by a theatre curriculum, but was incorporated in a subject of the *General Education Curriculum*, meant that the artistic background of the students varied. Owing to the distinctive function that the arts-curricula had from the official national curriculum, and owing to an analogous separation between the curricula of different arts-directions, students had very specific perceptions of arts and self-narratives as artists. The culture and process of socialisation of this school – based on its distinctiveness as an arts educational environment – initially provoked doubts in students for the appropriateness of the overall enterprise (See section 4.2.3; 4.2.4). Owing to the separative function of each arts-curriculum, students perceived each art form as a very particular domain of knowledge and ability, distinctive from the other art forms and from other forms of knowledge, curricular or social. In this context, they felt that their specialisation in different arts would impede the process of ensemble theatre-making.

Despite students' specialisation in different art forms, a common self-perception among the members of the group was detected and referred to their distinctive identity as artists. Their narrative demonstrates that although participants defined themselves in different domains of arts 'expertise', an overall self-perception characterised the identity of the group and made them feel distinctive (See section 4.2.3; 4.2.4). It was evident that this identity corresponded to students' achievement which manifested in their ability to symbolise, create meaningful images or present sub-textual meanings (Eisner, 2002).

This kind of ability was evident in the majority of the students' performances, independently from their arts-direction. This does not mean that students from theatre-direction were not more competent in acting than others; what this observation suggests is that almost all the students of this school – being experienced in arts – were able to create and communicate meanings. Moreover, their awareness of this ability was empowering for their agency, or for their *courage* in Arendt's sense (Stanley, 2007; Arendt, 1958, p.186).

Nevertheless, on the matter of ensemble ability, this collective perception of self as distinctive, and students' focus on their own artistic talent, created impediments in their sense of membership. Thus, students being preoccupied with their personal achievement sometimes permitted them to undervalue the potential of others' contribution to it. As a result, students' collective consciousness was not particularly developed. On the matter of students' political consciousness, the interest and the agonist spirit of the students were apparent, whereas their ability to connect this interest to their artistic activity was not particularly developed. The majority of students' felt eligible to express their ideas about contemporary politics, about the democratic principles and the ways in which they are reflected in recent years, as well as to reflect on their own participation and responsibility in society (See section 4.2.3). However, when politics needed to be incorporated in their artistic performance, the issue of specialisation re-emerged. Students who officially took part in youth political organisations were more informed, and therefore eligible, to talk and perform these issues.

Considering this context, the ensemble theatre-making was reconsidered and re-planned in order to communicate to students an integrated approach to the arts in which the “multi-vocal quality of dramatic symbols” could facilitate the participation of

students from other artistic backgrounds, and, therefore, with different strengths (Gallagher, 2000, p.48). Further emphasis was given to the provision of an apprenticeship model that could function as a common vocabulary for artistic communication among the students from different arts-directions (Winston, 2010, p.97). Ultimately, the overall process was oriented to explore ways that could create bridges between the artistic and the political action. It is essential to note that the collaboration with Mrs Karampetsou, and with teachers from different arts-directions, permitted the project to acquire cross-curricular and multi-perspectival dimensions that facilitated its overall socialising aspirations.

In this context, the distinctive strengths of students were gradually integrated in the widened space of theatre because the communicative practices between participants enabled them to exercise their dialogic skills both as social actors and as artists (Sennet, 2012). Hence, the *isegoric* communication, in this context, did not only refer to the social exchange of ideas, but was also concerned with the artistic dialogue among participants' skills that were gradually integrated in a common artistic framework (See sections 4.2.6.1, 4.2.6.2, 4.2.6.3). From this perspective, it can be argued that the isonomic participation was, here, indicated by students' artistic interest. This means that the ensemble socialising practices of theatre-making enabled the communication of different artistic repertoires which started to acquire a dialogic collaboration in students' artistic creation.

In the same line of reasoning, the apprenticeship model – apart from encouraging the valuing of different abilities – enabled the group of students to systematise their progress and artistic autonomy, and gradual self-institution (See section 4.2.6, and more particularly 4.2.6.2; 4.2.6.5). Students' experience in a specific apprenticeship model gradually enabled them to use independently some of its tools. The gradual use of the

tools, that the convention approach entailed, permitted students a greater sense of control over their work and increased and enriched their artistic autonomy. Alongside students' collaborative experience in the real level of drama, their participation in and re-creation of the play's *agons* provided the group with further appreciation of the intersubjectivity, of *isos phronein*. By performing the public events by different viewpoints, participants developed awareness of the impasses of *monos phronein* (See section 4.2.6.4). This awareness – 'gained' through the imagined experience – interacted with the communicative processes that structured the procedures of the real level.

Finally, it can be argued that the overall experience of ensemble theatre-making induced dimensions of politicisation of students' creations and possibilities of self-instituting actions (See section 4.2.6.5). These links, that students constructed between students' artistic creations and political ideas, were manifested in their performances, and further self-instituting actions that they organised in smaller groups. Towards the end of the process, students started to undertake collective initiatives both with regards to the themes that the final lessons would explore, and the political issues of the play that are important for contemporary politics. Based on their renewed awareness of arts potential to have public significance, smaller groups or whole class activities were instituted in order to communicate to wider audiences the meanings that students created and enacted throughout the ensemble theatre-making experience.

It is argued in summary that in the case of this school the ensemble theatre-making achieved part of its self-instituting possibilities and was more influential and re-creative for the school environment; however, for this possibility to be achieved, the overall school practices and the role of the teachers was catalytic. As Giroux suggests, for idealistic educational models to meet the conditions of their enactment and development, teachers' progressive ideas must be accompanied with authority and

power to structure the conditions of their work (1997, p.107). In the case of this school, teachers were more committed or open to a self-creating process for themselves. The overall possibilities that this school provided functioned inter-complementarily with the ensemble aspirations.

5.3 Cross-case reflections

Gallagher argues that

the research experience has something to say to [...] broader domains of understanding which moves beyond the specificity of the research, outside the study of school, and brings it into how we situate these relationships and understandings in broader socio-culture dimensions. (2012, p.51-52)

Following this line of reasoning, I aspire to reach some wider inferences that go beyond a typical research report that rely on statistical significance.

5.3.1 On citizenship education

In this context, it is argued that the teaching of citizenship as “a set of rights and obligations which a person merely steps into” is an insufficient educational approach because it neglects the practical nature of citizenship, and hence oversimplifies the complex procedures of young people’s socialisation (Wallace, 2001, p.28). On the matter of the practical nature of citizenship, Anyon emphasising the significance of practice for young people’s politicisation, argues that

information, readings and discussion does not, by itself, induce them to participate in transformative politics. (2009, p.392)

The main reason for which information and readings are not enough lies in their inability as learning methods to ‘infuse’ young people with any sense of identity. Rather, they remain in the level of information which is often rendered inapplicable in real life

contexts. As was analysed in the first chapter of this study, both democracy and citizenship are conceived and realised as enacted processes. Therefore, citizenship both presumes a kind of experienced knowledge and refers to an overall identity, rather than to a fixed form of knowledge. This identity is created throughout an experience of active participation in public communication and in self-instituting processes, while it also re-creates these processes through individuals' speech and action. Therefore, for students to create this identity, they need to be offered the experiences through which it will be constructed. They need the actual processes through the provision of

opportunities for them to develop the skills and experience, the successes, that can create in them a sense of efficacy as [...] effective actors in their communities. (*ibid.*, p.391)

Such learning opportunities, providing experiences of action-realisation and hence for self-realisation, constitute educational necessities for the formation of the identity of the citizen.

Apart from the impossibility of theoretical information to construct abilities and to form identities, the treatment of citizenship education as a straightforward and unambiguous 'apprenticeship' assumes a technicality that does not address a range of economic and socio-cultural factors that determine the already existing identity of young people. This means that the theoretical model of citizenship education not only neglects the experienced character of citizenship knowledge, but also underestimates the range of socio-economic factors that determine the overall politicisation of students (Habermas, 2006; Lister, 2007; Anyon, 2009). As was observed throughout the research praxis, different lifeworlds are created through different socialising procedures, constructing different identities and entailing different narratives of self. These identities and narratives – mirrored in students' skills and perceptions – define the extent of both the

ability and of entitlement to play a part in creative and self-instituting enterprises. Therefore, the process of young people's socialisation can be distorting or developing for active citizenship education (Weis, 2010, p.415). From this perspective, a meaningful approach to young people's citizenship needs to be informed by these contextual factors. This can be achieved only through a practical occupation that would *de facto* entail the use of already existing skills and identities of the participants.

5.3.2 On the pedagogic value of the ensemble theatre making

In this context, it can be argued that the pedagogic potential of ensemble theatre-making entails a range of *practices* of active participation that encourage the development of reflective and transformative/re-creative ability. Owing to its communicative and dialogic procedures ensemble theatre making entails self-adapting dimensions capable of responding to different lifeworlds. In particular, it can be argued that its action-based process combined with isegoric communication, renders the ensemble a meaningful experience of re-creative and self-instituting possibilities. This experience is constructed through different levels of the ensemble theatre process. On the social level, students practise an isonomic and action-oriented communication in order to self-regulate the *modus operandi* in their group work. In itself, this is an autonomy-oriented learning that enables students to institute themselves as a group and determine their own public performances. However, their participation – being extended to the public level of drama– facilitates students to develop the *courage* in Arendt's sense that public speech and action requires. In its turn, this public experience permits them to experience the aforesaid sense of efficacy or inefficacy, and hence, to act anew towards the same or an altered direction. Finally, the symbolic level permits their speech and action to go beyond the realistic limits of what is possible and impossible and

proceed towards rendering what they have imagined realisable – hence, concretely performed as Castoriadis enactment of social imaginary.

The gradual integration of these communicative processes in a collective and a constantly transformative and transformed process is at the heart of Castoriadis' theory of self-instituting society, and in Habermas' theory of communicative action. In Castoriadis' approach, the institutions of a democratic polis encourage its own self-instituting possibilities by allowing or even enabling citizens to reconsider and re-create society. Inversely, the active citizens are in a constant process of social re-institution, and hence re-creative democratising process itself. Similarly, Habermas argues that commitment in communicative actions induces a critical stance from the part of the communicators and gradual amendments to their lifeworlds. From this perspective, it can be argued that part of the educational dynamic of the ensemble lies in its realisation through this interactive process between itself as an institution and its members as social and artistic creators.

It is exactly in this communicative possibility that the ensemble theatre-making model owns its self-adaptability and its potential to become significantly informed and respondent to each educational context. This communicative process it entails is not limited to the internal practices of ensemble theatre, and does not only refer to the interaction of the different levels of the ensemble theatre process. Rather, it concerns the overall realisation of the process in the different ways that it is developed by different social or cultural group of students. This means that as participants are encouraged to institute their *modus operandi* in the social and the artistic level, the ensemble theatre model of learning is re-created by the lifeworlds of the group.

Taking into account the overall syllogism, it is argued that the ensemble theater-making model can be viewed as a practical (able to engage students in an active process

of isonomic participation), theatrical (able to engage students in process of reflection , imagination and realisation of possibility) and contextual (capable of self-adaptation to different lifeworlds) educational model. The dialogic function of its ‘features’ entails significant educational possibilities which stand differently from the reproductive pedagogic actions that perpetuate passive or, in essence, apolitical processes of citzensization.

5.4 Further Research/Limitation

Taking into account the centrality of the dialogic practices in the context of this study, it can be argued that a possibility for further research could be generated by a further exploration of dialogic and communicative practices in the educational settings. The groups of students with which I collaborated were characterized by a shared identity. More specifically, in School A the collective identity of the students was based on a common perception of self as a social and artistic actor. In the case of School B, where the collectiveness was more challenged, owing to the different artistic ‘origins’ of the students, there was still a shared identity that characterised the whole group’s self-perception: the artistic identity. In this respect, the dialogic possibilities among the students were not severely challenged. However, it can be further researched whether an extremely heterogeneous social group – where the differences do not concern artistic backgrounds but ethnical, cultural and class variety – would have responded in a similar way or if such a process would entail further challenges.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

1. To which extent the research and its subject was relevant to the students and appropriate for their age?
2. How did you like/evaluate the students' work
3. To which extent the process encourages the collective work or to which extent it was based on the talented students?
4. To which extent was the project original (in ideas) and demanding for the students?
5. To which extent the process facilitated the development of students' abilities/skills?
6. To which extent the project was based on a positive/innovative image for students or in the reproduction of stereotypes?
7. To which extent the facilitator's pedagogy demonstrated acceptance/ and support for students?
8. To which extent the facilitator was providing constructive observations and guidance?
9. To which extent the facilitator was taking into account the outcome of the previous lesson in order to re-plan the following one?
10. To which extent the facilitator was listening, taking into account, and incorporated students observations? Was she really engaged in a communicative process with the participants of the process?

Appendix Two: Images of Students' Notes

Κρέοντας -> Θείος

Έξουλις -> εστέ, ποτε, τή ποτε -> θαύρασε

Πολυμύς -> άταπος

①
-> liked

1) Μας άρεσε που θαύρασε εμείς και τις περιγρόφα
τε.

2) Μας άρεσε ότι είχαμε νόστον ότου ωυαλιά και
συμπαθήσαν.

↳ liked

①

17/3/09

Ο πιο σημαντικός λόγος για τον οποίο ο Αρτεμίδης ήθε-
λε να δείξει τον Πολυμύς είναι γιατί ο Πολυμύς
είναι αδελφός της έχουν συγγενικές δεσμούς. Και θέλει να
δείξει πως και σε αυτό έπος το πρόσωπο του αδελφού
της.

Αίτιος -> προς Κρέοντα και αρραβωνισμένος Αρτεμίδης

- Αφού δεν είχε ο Κρέοντας τη διάθεση να δείξει τον
Πολυμύς θα έπρεπε να απήσει εν Αρτεμίδης να δείξει
τον αδελφό της. Επίσης θα έπρεπε να επιβάλλει η
υπόψη πως γιατί δεν είναι έφικτον να επιβάλλει η
θαλασινή πόλη σε όποιον ήθελε ν' αποδώσει απέν-
σε κάποιο πρόσωπο.

10/3/09

Η Αντιχόνι (λογικά) θα φανταζόταν τον νεκρό αδελφό της στεναχωρημένο διότι παραμένει άδαφτος. Ο Πισυνίως θα μπορούσε επίσης να είναι σκληρότερος με τον θείο του, για αυτό που είχε απλά ~~θα~~ επιπτεύεται την Αντιχόνι. ~~Ο αδελφός του~~ ~~θα τον~~ θα τον δικαιώνει θέλοντας να τον ^{επαινώσει} παίρει με όλες τις τιμές ή να πάρει κόντρα στον κρέοντα. ~~Κρατάει τον αδελφό του στην αγκαλιά του~~ Η Αντιχόνι με αυτό δείχνει την αγάπη της προς τον αδελφό της, και τον ηρωισμό που ανταποκρίνεται με ^{την} γνώμη της αυτή. Δεν παρακαίεται φαίνεται να είναι ηρωική ή εναντιοτάτη.

ΕΠΙΤΥΧΩΣΕΙΣ

Μα ήρεσε πολύ αυτό που κάναμε σήμερα (10/3/09) και
θα ήθελα να γίνετε έτσι το μαθητή από εδώ και
πέρα. Επίσης, κατά την ώρα με τα χαρτιά (worksheets)
και όχι ο ώριμος = dislike (1) → like (3)
ήταν πολύ ωραίο αυτό, το οποίο περιουσι-
αρχαίως κ' εδίδανε την συμπεριφορά
κ' ευφραδικότητα μας.

↳ like
(4)

①

-δημιουργία

①

②

Είναι κουκλοθέατρο που απεικονίζει δύο ~~φ~~ ζώιμες
κούκλες κινεζικής καταγωγής με παράδοσιακές, στολές
του τόπου τους

Επίσης το βιβλίο τους δείχνει αρκετά θυμωμένο

↳ description ③

↳ sombourness ①
↳ τεταμένη κατάσταση

- Μία παράσταση ανεβαίνει με νοήματα μέσα από τα
ρούχα, τους ανθρόπους και κυρίως από το χιόρο του
θεάτρου.

Πως η Αναγόνη Γνωρίζεται πως ο Πολυνίκης θα αναδύσει
για την ανάντη της Αναγών;

Θα ένωσε ευχαρίστηση ο Πολυνίκης γιατί η Αναγόνη ήθελε
να κάνει κάτι ηρωικό το οποίο θα είχε αρνητικές συνέπειες
για την ίδια σύμβαση με την απόφαση του Κρέοντα.
Έτσι λοιπόν ο Πολυνίκης θα ένωσε υπέρβαση που
είχε μία τόσο γενναία αδερφή.

Μας άρεσε το ελεύθερο περπάτημα που διαβατάγαμε
και χαρακτηρίσαμε ως κινήσεις μας.

↳ ⑤

1η
μέρα:

υπονοίος 3

συμπύ 3

παράσταση 2

κοινό 3

(θεατές)

συμπύ 2

φέλιο/κλάμα 1

θεατρικό έργο 2

γενάριο 1

συμνοθεσία 1



2η

μέρα:

Σεβασμός &
αξιοποίηση.

σκηνή 2
τραγωδία 2
πλοιοί 2



Ινδικό θάλασσο - Καδουκάλι

Ινδικό θάλασσο - Επὶ - Μαχωνάρις
οδυσσεύς

θάλασσο του -
Εξοχή

↳ reconsideration
something new
(2)

Αποβαίος Εβερπίς
Ελευθερία Ανόγειν

σπανιό

λόγος εως ελπίδος η ελπίδα

ελπίδα

ελπίδα

ελπίδα - ελπίδα

ελπίδα - ελπίδα

ελπίδα - ελπίδα

ελπίδα - ελπίδα

ελπίδα - ελπίδα

ελπίδα - ελπίδα

ελπίδα - ελπίδα

¹ Σκηνικά, ¹ Κοστούμια, ¹ Χορογραφίες, ¹ Διατρικό
Κείμενο.

Μεταφορέωσή = Ο ο άνθρωπος παίζει
ανάλογα με τον ρόλο του.

Leptousiotection
something new

(3)

Τι μας ερχεται στο
μυαλό όταν σκεφτόμαστε την λέξη
"Θέατρο"?

ηθοποιός
σκηνοθέτης
ακουστικότητα
σκηνή
θεατής
μυθοδία
κόσμος.
χορογραφία.
μεταμόρφωση
τραγούδι,

επικοινωνία
έκφραση συναισθημάτων
εμπειρία
ομαδικότητα.

Τι μας έρχεται στο μυαλό όταν ακούμε
Την Ιξία Θέσφο.:

Συνεργασία 1
Κοινά 1
Ενίσχυρος. 1

σεβασμός ΚΑΤΑΝΟΗΣΗ
ΕΙΝΗΚΡΙΝΕΑ

Είμαι



Αγομάζε μου ~~Είμαι~~

Είμαι

Οιδιπόδας

Ξέρω ότι η αγάπη μου / / / /
μπορεί να σου κάνει
στύγος και ανόρθωση. Πόθεν. Είμαι Ισχυρ. Ατίγ.

Αλλά ίσως είναι η μέση της. Εάν εχθρός μου ή αέτι
της νέας μου. Δεν

ναφαισταγή 1
βουνή 1
υσιω 2
υποδιαγού 1
ηθονπιός 1

✓

1) Έκφραση +

Στην φωνογραφία αυτή είναι ένας σιγκάτος που
αποτελείται από 11 ήχοι που είναι 5 διαφορετικοί ήχοι.
Το σημαντικό είναι το πρόσωπο που αναπαριστάται
... ..
L> description ②

Επίσης ο ένας ηχογράφος υποδείχνει διαφορετικούς
ήχους, ο οποίος με διαφορετικό ύψος, το είναι από
σημασιολογία, διαφορετικές πληροφορίες

L> ~~Σ.Κ.Δ.~~
(5)

L> description

①

Appendix Three: 1st Lesson plan: as was initially planned for both schools³⁴ (duration: 1 and ½ hour)

(1).Introduction to the project

The students sit in a circle and they are introduced to the project

I explain to the students the use of the process-folios and I distribute the process folios to them (as a combination of diary and journal)

(2). Process folio activity:

The students are asked to write something that comes to their mind when they hear the word theatre + discussion

(3). Game: ‘Baltazar says’

We play the game ‘Baltazar says’ where the students have to follow instructions only when Baltazar gives the instruction and not the teacher.

Some of the instructions that Baltazar gives are:

Baltazar says to make a stereotypical figure of actor in Epidaurus

Baltazar says we are in the Athenian *agora*

Baltazar says we are stubborn

Baltazar says we are arguing

(4). Trust game in pairs:

One member of the pair needs to close his/her eyes and the other member has to give him/her directions to move in the class protecting him /her at the same time from any obstacles or from getting hurt

³⁴ This lesson plan was not realised in either school. It is included in the appendices in order to provide the reader with an idea about the re-planning process of the fieldwork and for the changes that the initial project has been through, according to the context of each school.

(5). Trust game in groups:

Students form tight circles. A volunteer is asked to stand in the middle of each circle. He/she is left to the hands of his/her peers and it is their responsibility to hold him/her and prevent his/her from falling.

(6). Collective Trust game

(Half of the classroom is playing and the rest is the audience and vice versa): A number of balloons are thrown in the common space that the students are given and the group without talking to each other has to keep all the balloons in the air

(7). Simulation game (in pairs):

A pair of students is on stage and an object is placed in the middle of the circle. The pair is asked to imagine a condition in which both actors want the object (paper) and try to convince each other that they are entitled to keep the object.

The audience must guess the story that the pair of actors initially agreed upon. Questions concerning fairness will follow such as: did the actors used arguments or try to deceive each other? What mediums each actor used? For whom was the object more important? Who, according to you, deserves the object? Was their story/ given circumstances convincing? (After the first pair has finished, more participants can volunteer to play the game if they want)

(8) Simulation game (in groups):

Groups of students have to create a small scene or a still image (according to their preference) from their favourite movie or theatrical play. After their scene/image is ready they have to present it in another group which has to guess which movie it is or what is happening in the presented scene. A

small discussion follows and the two groups have to advise each other and suggest them ways to make clearer the meanings of their presentations.

(9). Presentations and discussion

Each group will be given some more time to rehearse and then present their scenes to the rest of the classroom.

The discussion that will follow will need to include issues such as the clarity of the meanings, the moments that were chosen, and their representativeness of the movies/plays they had chosen as well as the reason that they might be significant for the plots of the chosen movies/plays

(10). Reflective activity (in groups):

Students in groups are asked to reflect on the activities we did and name their characteristics (rules, aims, playful elements, challenges).A whole class discussion follows.

The students return to their pairs and discuss how these characteristics can be related to theatre which leads again to a whole class discussion

(11) Whole Group discussion:

Students sit in the circle and we discuss on their expectations for the following lessons and provide suggestions. We also discuss on how we can organize their suggestions

(12). Process-folio activity:

They are asked to write down one thing that they've enjoyed mostly doing from today's lesson and one thing that they haven't enjoyed doing

Appendix Four: 1st Lesson plan as was re-planned for the School A: redefining theatre (24/02/2009)

(1). Introduction to the project

The students sit in a circle and they are introduced to the project.

I explain to the students the use of the process-folios and I distribute the process folios to them (as a combination of diary and journal)

(2). Activity in groups:

Photos and pictures from theatre spaces, performances and actors are placed around the classroom (See appendix four).

Students are asked to stand next to picture that they like or dislike, they consider meaningful, or impressive.

After students' decision, groups of students are formed for each picture.

Each group is asked to discuss the meaning of the photo/picture they chose and present it to the other groups of the classroom.

A possible discussion about theatre places, or genres between different groups is encouraged.

(3). Activity in groups: Performance analysis

Each group of students is given a short video from a performance in order to interpret it. (Students are encouraged to make meanings both from the textual elements of the performance as well as the sub-textual).

Then, all the groups are asked to analyse or present the video they saw to the other groups. (In this activity students are encouraged to ‘borrow’ moments of the performance they show and incorporate them in their analysis/presentation.

(4). Activity in groups:

Each group of students is given a three short abstracts from theatrical texts.

The members of each group are invited to choose one of these abstracts and improvise it, by using some of the new ‘elements’ that were observed in the previously analysed photos or in the videos. (to incorporate/imitate gestures and voice tones, to choose space of performance as well as to create space relations).

Groups will, firstly, perform to each other. Between groups, students will interpret and discuss each other’s work.

Each group will be given time to re-rehearse according to their peer-group advice and then, whole class presentations will follow.

(5). Whole group activity

We sit in a circle and individual students will stand up and imitate a pose, moment or gesture that was previously presented – at some moment – of the lesson.

Other classmates should try to guess which picture or moment their classmates tries to re-create and are asked, slowly, one-by-one, to stand up in order to complete each other's initiatives.

(6). Reflective activity:

The students are asked in pairs to reflect on the whole process in their process-folios. The lesson ends with a whole class discussion

Appendix Five: 2nd lesson plan as was re-planned for School A (03/03/2009)

(1). Pair and whole class activity:

Students in pairs are invited to remember the ensemble principles that were discussed in the previous lesson and to identify which of these principles are more significant for them.

Then, in a whole class discussion, each pair is asked to share some of the principles they wrote down and to explain the reasons for which some of these principles are very significant to them. These principles are written on the blackboard in order to create the social contract for our collaboration.

Back in pairs, students are invited to relate these principles and the constitution of our social contract to citizenship and democracy. A whole class discussion follows in order for the pairs to share their ideas with the whole group.

(2). Activity in circle:

Whole group narration of *Antigone*

(3). Activity in pairs:

Each pair of students is given an abstract from the *prologue* of the play.

Each pair of students is invited to read the abstract from the prologue, to identify the arguments that each heroine uses and the key-phrases that condense each heroine's argument.

Based on these phrases, each pair of students create an improvisation (that should incorporate at least two phrase Sophocles' text) between Ismene and Antigone.

+ Presentation of the improvisations.

+ Whole class discussion

(4.) Activity in groups:

Each group of students is invited prepare an improvisation in which a group of citizens discusses/comments in the agora the dialogue between the two sisters: What was at stake for each of them? With whom they agree? Should Ismene help Antigone or not? What should Antigone finally do?

(5.) Teacher in role:

The teacher in the role of citizen participates in the improvisation of the students as citizens to pose questions and provide stimuli to the discussion of the students as citizens in the agora.

Appendix Six: 4th lesson plan as was re-planned for School A (17/03/2009)

(1). Whole class activity

a) A volunteer in the role of the messenger recapitulates what happened in the polis the last few days, (up to the point of the *agon* between Antigone and Creon) . Students as citizens in the *agora* discuss the events. In this process they have to talk with *parrhesia* (moral obligation to speak your mind) with regards to these public issues.

b) The main themes from their arguments are recorded and written in the blackboard.

c) The students-citizens form groups according to these themes. Students choose the themes in which they are more interested to treat in their improvisations.

The students are reminded that their improvisations must present their opinions as citizens.

e) After reaching a common decision, they arrange meetings with Creon and Antigone in order to influence the evolutions of the events.

(2). Collective Improvisation

The students sit in a circle and two volunteers as the two heroes (Creon and Antigone) pause at the center of the circle.

Students stand up individually, touch the hero and say a phrase as his/her inner thoughts.

(3). Whole class activity:

The two heroes stand in the center of the circle. Students have to decide who is in the most difficult position. After they made their decision they are asked to show this in a still image.

(4). Activity in groups:

Students are divided in groups and each of the group takes an episode to present. We make sure that all the episodes will be presented by the groups. Students are given some conventions of which they can choose from to include in their presentations.

(5) Presentations

The students present the episodes and a whole class discussion follows about what each episode included.

While each group presents the rest of the classroom is given lines from the text that can be performed by the audience/citizens, in order to create the whole atmosphere of the play.

Appendix Seven: 1st Lesson plan as was re-planned for the School B: redefining arts and theatre (28/09/2009)

(1) Introduction and discussion:

The students sit in a circle and they are introduced to the project.

The students are introduced to the process-folios.

The students are asked about their expectations from the project as well as their attitudes towards theatre (specially the students that are not from the theatre-direction)

(2) Whole Group Activity: Game ‘Baltazar says’

We play the game ‘Baltazar says’ where the students have to follow instructions only when Baltazar gives the instruction and not the teacher.

Some of the instructions that Baltazar gives are:

Baltazar says to make a stereotypical figure of actor in Epidaurus

Baltazar says we are in the Athenian agora

Baltazar says create a stereotypical depiction of theatre

(3) Activity in groups:

Students are asked to make create a still image that will represent theatre.

What theatre means to them and how they understand it as an art.

Appendix Eight: 2nd lesson plan as was re-planned for School B (05/10/2009)

(1). Activity in groups:

Students in groups are invited to discuss the principles that structure the life of a democratic polis and values in a post-war polis.

They need to create two still images and present the transition from the one image to the other in slow motion.

In the first image, they are asked to present how the democratic principles permeate the everyday practices of a democratic polis; a moment namely in a democratic polis. In their second image they should present a moment in a post war polis. A discussion follows on their presentations.

(2). Whole group activity:

Half of the group/classroom pause in their post war still images and the rest of the group walks in this polis in-role of Creon. They are asked to think about his feelings and the kind of thought that he makes.

Students who perform Creon are encouraged to discuss with the citizens of the polis. (after the completion of the first round the members of the group change roles).

(3). Collective narration

Students are invited to narrate the story collectively, in the circle. Each of them has to add a phrase to the previous person's line.

(4)Activity in the circle:

Students are invited to make a decision who they want to support by standing behind the hero who is in the most difficult position according to them.

(5). Activity in pairs:

Students are given the whole *prologue* (dialogue between Ismene and Antigone) in order to define the arguments of each heroine in thematic categories (religious, political, personal), to ‘shape’ each heroine’s personality according to her arguments and to choose which of these arguments are more significant to them. The pairs are invited to choose the most powerful line of each heroine and to find a psychological gesture for that.

The papers with the chosen phrases are mixed up, so that each pair will have to present to a new still image what has been a significant phrase/argument for another pair of their classmates.

All the pairs will perform a moment of this dialogue in a way that will reveal each heroine’s worldview/stance (by the use of psychological gesture, key phrase).

(6). Group activity: Improvisation

Students are invited to imagine possible reasons for which Creon had decided to deny Polynices’ burial and perform it in groups to the rest of the classroom.

Appendix Nine: 5th Lesson Plan as was re-planned for School B (02/11/2009)

(1). Collective, ‘objective narration’ (from Michael Chekhov’s acting system).

The students are asked to sit in a circle and narrate the story of the play in an objective way, namely by taking into account all the perspectives in the play. Their narration should not entail personal judgment or emotional nuances.

(2). Whole class discussion

The students are invited to identify the ‘critical events’ of this story.

(3). Performance/Presentation

Students are divided in groups and are invited to prepare a performance/presentation of the events that have been (in the previous activity) chosen. Based on this events, each group is asked to prepare a performative narration of the story that will also try to illuminate sub0textual meanings of the play or of the events that have been chosen.

(4). Collective performance

The short presentations of the students are presented in a collective performance.

(5).Activity in pairs: psychological gestures in dialogue

Students in pairs are invited to take the role of Creon and Antigone. Each pair must conclude to three psychological gestures for each hero.

The first gesture will show the hero: as s/he is viewed by the other one. For example, the first gesture for Antigone should depict how Antigone appears in Creon's mind.

The second gesture should depict what each hero feels but the other one ignores. For example, which is the feelings of Antigone that Creon denies to see and vice versa.

The third gesture should depict each hero as s/he is conceive in citizens' minds. How would the citizens think about them.

(6). Presentations and discussion

The two groups present their 'subjective narration/performance' and a whole class discussion follows where students talk about the differences or similarities of their narrations

(7). Activity in groups

Students in groups are invited to improvise on how different social groups (the media, religious citizens, left-wing young people, right-wing young people, intellectuals) react to these performances.

The students are asked to think on how issues of power, interests, beliefs or ideologies influence the perspectives of each social group. Students are invited to incorporate these meanings in their improvisations through the choice of the appropriate conventions that are able to disclose these sub-implicit meanings/interests.

(8). Whole class discussion

A whole class discussion follows in order for the group to reflect collectively on the ways in which different social experiences (lifeworlds) permeate the political ideas/actions of different social groups.

Appendix Ten: Photos









Appendix Eleven: Transcript from the Lesson

Female student: Miss, I wanted to ask something else for today's lesson. Irrelevant ... (she probably said that because our previous discussion concerned an improvisation) but.. Are you going to correct us at all. I mean to show us how we should do it?

Myrto: But I am expressing my opinion, I participated in the interpretation of some of your presentations.

Female student: Yes miss, (laugh) .. I mean not in the normal way..

Female student (a different one): Yes miss, you don't say what we have to do ..

Male student: you do it as we do it miss. Like .. you know .. you say that "my impression from this improvisation is this" but you don't finally say if it was correct

Myrto: you know better if it was correct. Your classmates' interpretations direct you. If your classmates perceived the meanings that you wanted to present. Then it is correct, as you say. So, you don't need me to say

Male student: If they didn't?

Myrto: If they didn't it is good if you do what we did today or the previous time. You have to discuss to see what was not perceive, how this could be done differently. But you have to find the way to do that by yourselves. Without my intervention in your conversation. This is what we have to learn here. We have to learn to make this conversation in a way that helps you in the next improvisation.

Female student: (a different one): So the others (she meant the other classmates who view the presentation) are able to suggest other ways of doing it?

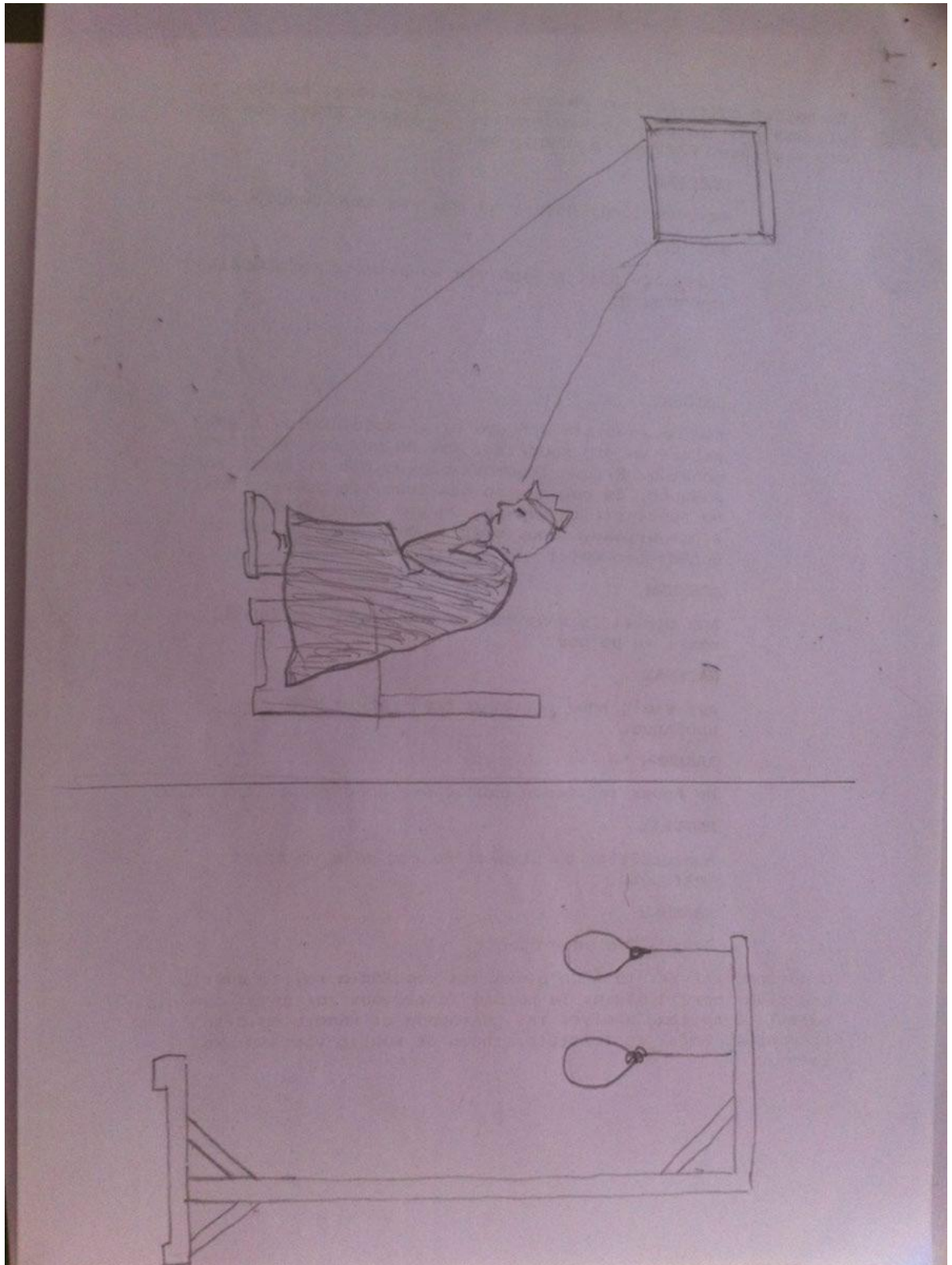
Myrto: If the group who presents would like some suggestions, yes. They can.

Female student (a different one): So miss .. We have to watch very carefully..

Male student: ..and we have to be good, ..you know .. organized, when we present.

Appendix Twelve: Students' Paintings







Appendix Thirteen: Abstract from Mrs Karampetsou's article (to be published in March 2013)

Results from the classroom:

In an overall estimation, students achieved to approach the tragic play as a medium of active participation and to move from mere reading to a practical process of interpretation.

They interpretations acquires further depth through the multi-perspectival exploration of the play. A lot of times, they swayed between the two worldviews of the heroes and they actually changed their opinion with regards to the hero who is in the most difficult position or whose is decision is more just. [...]

More particularly, with regards to the political issues of this play, they experienced roles of political responsibility, depicting either the authority or the citizens of Thebes.

Another great benefit – which was obvious from the initial workshops – was the personal in the interpretation of the play throughout its exploration. For the first time. Their own opinion was valuable for the other classmates who themselves also explored and made conclusions. As spectators they had a perspective, as actors they were creating perspectives. Essential aspiration, therefore, was the active mode of learning. [...]

Finally, the participation of the students as a collective as well as the noticeable contribution of 'silent' students was significant in the renewed coherence of the classroom.

If this can be also taken into account, the pedagogical viewpoint of the teacher also changed. For the first time, I realized the great benefit of the integration of ensemble and

dramatic ‘techniques’ in the learning process and the depth they can ascribe to the pedagogic action.

With regards to the evaluation of the students, they responded very well in their exams (grade 15 in the average while more than 5 of fifteen achieved 18). Their answers to the hermeneutic questions were remarkably developed and analysed in depth.

[...]

It is also interesting to note that, while during the same year, I was teaching this module in another classroom, there was great difference between the two groups of students with regards to their appreciation of the module. The students who were taught Antigone in a more ‘traditional’ approached the lesson as a simple text that presents a contest of ideologies. By contrast, the students who participated in the ensemble drama experience constructed a different kind of understanding and appreciation of the tragic text; one that recognized its value for today.

Appendix Fourteen: Interview

1. How did you experience the process? How you would describe what we did if you had to narrate it? If you had to create your own story of it?
2. (if they do not mention the play in the previous answer) How you would narrate the play? To which issues or moments you would refer?
3. What you would expect for us to do but was neglected? Is something that was left behind? (after students' answers) How do you think that you could do it by yourselves? How do you think that you could organise it?
4. Can you think of another text (literature, play, dance, or painting) that discusses similar issues with Antigone?
5. Can you think of another text (from your curricular modules) that could be explored in the same way?